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Supporting Effective School Board Governance

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Abstract

The contextual landscape for superintendents in Alberta is changing. Managing the board was once the main responsibility of the superintendent. With the implementation of the superintendent leadership quality standard, superintendents are now expected to demonstrate a number of competencies as part of their role. One major competency is supporting effective governance practices of the board they serve. This Organizational Improvement Plan (OIP) addresses the Problem of Practice (PoP) focused on building superintendent and trustee efficacy in moving towards more effective governance practices. The objective of this OIP is to introduce a new approach to governing which will result in effective governance practices. The intended outcome of developing effective governance practices is improved student success. This will require collaboration between superintendent, senior administration and the board of trustees in order for organizational change to occur, and be sustained. This process will require that trust be fostered and maintained throughout. Cultural and political factors must be taken into consideration, as well as respecting the history of the board and the jurisdiction. This will help maintain trust by the board that this change is designed to help them improve, as this process will challenge trustees to engage in significant changes to how they operate as a board and how they work with each other and the superintendent. It is recognized that this process will take time, and will utilize a leadership from the middle approach. Implementing a new approach to governance will provide benefit to students and staff for many years to come.

Keywords: school board governance, trust, leadership from the middle, organizational change

Executive Summary

The purpose of this Organizational Improvement Plan (OIP) is focused on addressing a Problem of Practice (PoP) centering on expanding superintendent and board efficacy to support the development of a more effective approach to governing. With respect to this OIP, effective governance refers to the board and superintendent working as a unified team focused on the moral imperative. It focuses on a core set of practices which revolve around a governance core (Campbell & Fullan, 2019). While the jurisdiction is recognized provincially as a high performing school division, this may not be directly linked so much to the governance practices of the board, but rather the leadership capacity in our schools.

Eparchy Catholic Schools (ECS) is the anonymized jurisdiction which is served as the intended focus of this OIP. There is a positive correlation between governance practices and student success (Saatcioglu et al., 2011). This could lead one to naturally assume that the board of ECS is currently engaging in effective governance. Upon closer inspection there are many areas within the governance practice of the board that could be improved in order to generate even better outcomes for the students they serve.

Chapter One begins by providing the organizational context that the PoP exists in, which includes addressing the political, economic, social and cultural contexts and how ECS has been fashioned as a result. I then discuss my own personal position within the jurisdiction, my ability to enact change and the theoretical lens that I approach my PoP with is discussed. Coherence Theory (Fullan & Quinn, 2015) provides the conceptual roadmap to guide improvement. Coherence, with respect to this OIP is defined as a shared, deep understanding of the work of the board (Campbell & Fullan, 2019). Additionally, the leadership from the middle approach as created by Hargreaves and Braun (2010) is utilized. It is refined by Fullan (2015) that in this

context, the board and superintendent are considered to be middle level managers, positioned between government and schools. Campbell and Fullan, 2019 highlight that leadership from the middle relies on three core concepts: Philosophy (understanding government policy), Structure (interdisciplinary teams) and Culture (embedded professional collaboration). The efforts of leadership from the middle result in system-wide change.

Utilizing this lens, I frame the PoP that currently exists in ECS, by identifying the gaps between the current practice of the board with respect to governance and the more effective practices which would be desired. This includes a PEST analysis (Bensoussan & Fleisher, 2013) and reviewing questions that emerge as a result. Finally, an assessment to determine whether ECS is ready for change is conducted, resulting in the conclusion that the jurisdiction is in fact ready to engage in changing practice.

Chapter Two captures the planning and development portion of my OIP. Specifically, I address how utilizing the leadership from the middle approach (Hargreaves & Braun, 2013) supports the change process in addressing my PoP. I then identify the need to utilize a framework to support leading the change process. The McKinsey 7S model (Bryan, 2008) is used to as a structure to provide focus and a systems approach to change. This is accomplished by examining seven elements that are critical to the organization and checking for a coherence among trustees and myself. When one element is improved upon, it will have a positive effect on the other elements. This model also aligns closely with coherence theory which will aid in its application.

In order to diagnose and analyze the changes which would be required in ECS, I have chosen the Congruence Model (Nadler & Tushman, 2018) to examine the operations of the board and related results. As a result of this analysis, it became clear that trustees have an awareness of

policy and governance, yet lack a cohesive approach to governing itself. This has a potentially negative impact on the effectiveness of their governance practices. Possible solutions to the PoP are discussed, and then the ethical considerations impacting leadership are connected to the proposed solution. The possible solutions include doing nothing (not engaging in change), focusing on the G-TEC policy model used by the board and finally, the preferred solution of implementing the governance core model, along with a small focus on the G-TEC model.

Chapter Three provides the plan for implementation, evaluation and how the process will be communicated. I begin by providing the strategy that I will engage in to initiate change. Goals are identified as well as contributing factors. Stakeholder reactions, resources required and potential implementation issues are discussed. I then identify the method in which I will monitor and evaluate the change process. Specifically, I share how the Plan, Do, Study, Act model (PDSA) will be utilized in conjunction with the McKinsey 7S model to review and refine the implementation of my plan. I then move on to identifying the plan to communicate the need for change. Here, I utilize Lewis' (2011) five dimensions of communications strategy to communicate with the applicable audiences the need for this change.

The OIP is concluded by highlighting that even though we are in the second year of the pandemic, the need for change is greater than ever before. Additionally, as municipal elections will take place this fall, the need to have the pertinent structures in place in order to continue the movement towards effective governance practices is vital. This initial work will lay the foundation for a potentially new board to continue building upon.

Acknowledgements

During the last year of my Bachelor's degree, I decided that at some point I would like to pursue my Doctorate. Twenty-seven years later the journey is completed. I have enjoyed the benefit of an amazing faculty at Western University and a truly wonderful cohort. Most importantly, without the support, patience, and sacrifice of my wife Angelica and sons Joshua and Matthew, I would not have been able to complete this work. It is to them that I am forever grateful, and dedicate this work.

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Acronyms

ASBA (Alberta School Boards Association)

CASS (College of Alberta School Superintendents)

CEO (Chief Executive Officer)

ECS (Eparchy Catholic Schools)

G-TEC (Governing Through Engagement and Collaboration Model)

OIP (Organizational Improvement Plan)

PEST (Political, Economic, Social and Technological sources of change)

PDSA (Plan, Do, Study, Act)

PoP (Problem of Practice)

SLQS (Superintendent Leadership Quality Standard)

Definitions

Alberta Education Act: The Alberta Education Act defines the roles and responsibilities of the Ministry of Education, School Boards and stakeholders.

Coherence theory: Coherence theory focuses on developing a significant understanding of the work that is shared mutually among all members and theory provides a framework relying on four key components that when executed synchronously support effective leadership. (Fullan & Quinn, 2015).

Congruence Model: According to Nadler and Tushman (1980), the congruence model emphasizes transformation which is reliant on organizational components and how well they work together once the inputs have been applied. The authors indicate four main components that need to be in congruence: task, individual, informal and formal structures.

Contingency Theory: Contingency theory focuses on the traits of a leader and the context in which they are operating (Verkerk, 2019).

Efficacy: Efficacy refers to being able to generate a desired or intended result.

Governance Core: The Governance Core is based on five core elements as identified by Campbell and Fullan (2019) which create a foundation for governance mindsets for efficacy to begin to develop. They include the moral imperative of governing, the trustee governance mindset, the superintendent governance mindset, onboarding new trustees, and governing for efficacy by integrating coherence.

Governing Through Engagement and Collaboration Model (G-TEC): The G-TEC Model was created by the Alberta School Boards Association (ASBA; Alberta School Boards Association, 2019). The ASBA describes the G-TEC model as having five key elements which promote effective governance. They include understanding roles, accountability, assurance,

engagement and collaboration. Finally, the ASBA indicates that these elements, when engaged synchronously provide the framework for effective governance when the model is applied appropriately.

Leadership from the middle: Created by Hargreaves and Braun (2010) leadership from the middle allows for superintendents and boards to utilize the strengths of their professional networks to interpret policy and direction from the government and implement it with the collective wisdom of the entire educational system. Fullan (2015) clarifies that with respect to the educational system, the government and related Ministry are at the apex of the system while schools and teachers form the base.

Lewis' Five Dimensions of Communication Strategy: This is a five-dimensional strategy which utilizes both the perspective of Implementer and Stakeholder. The dimensions include: disseminating information and soliciting input, one-sided or two-sided messaging, gain or loss frame, blanket/targeted messages, and discrepancy/efficacy (Lewis, 2015).

Nudge Theory: According to Thaler and Sunstein (2009) nudge theory relies on prodding or nudging and individual or group towards a desired change by making alternatives less attractive.

McKinsey 7S Model: The 7S model is a matrix of seven variables or areas that rely on each other in order to manage change (Channon & Caldart, 2015) and is used to analyze the structural design of an organization.

PEST Analysis: The PEST analysis is utilized to scrutinize pressures external to the body in with respect to the influence on the organization (Sammut-Bonnici & Galea, 2015). PEST represents political, economic, social and technological sources of change.

Superintendent Leadership Quality Standard (SLQS): The SLQS is a set of competencies that superintendents in Alberta must be able to demonstrate (Alberta Education, 2020c).

Chapter One: Introduction and Problem

Chapter One of this Organizational Improvement Plan (OIP) contains seven sections. It begins by setting the organizational context to identify what the reader needs to know about my jurisdiction. I then identify and discuss my leadership position and lens statement. I then move into identifying and deliberating the leadership Problem of Practice (PoP). The PoP is framed, and guiding question emerging from the PoP are discussed. This provides the necessary backdrop to discuss my leadership-focused vision for change. Finally, the organizational change readiness of the jurisdiction is examined. To safeguard the privacy of the jurisdiction, anonymization has been employed. The pseudonym Eparchy Catholic Schools (ECS) has been applied as the name of the jurisdiction as part of this process.

Organizational Context

In any analysis of an organization and the context in which it operates many factors must be addressed. Some of these factors include the broad political, economic, social, and cultural contexts and their effects on the organization and related leadership of it. One method available to examine contexts is via the PEST analysis. Tools such as the PEST analysis are commonly utilized on a frequent basis because they allow the leader to understand outside elements and their impact which allows the impact to be mitigated through a proactive response (Bensoussan & Fleisher, 2013). PEST represents political, economic, social and technological sources of change and it scrutinizes pressures external to the body with respect to the influence on the organization (Sammut-Bonnici & Galea, 2015). Because my focus is on supporting effective governance practices, technology will be replaced with an analysis of culture as it is more applicable in this context.

Political Context

The political context of ECS begins in legislation in the Alberta Education Act (Alberta Education, 2020a). The Alberta Education Act defines what a school jurisdiction is, and who is responsible for governing it, which in our case is the board. The Alberta Education Act also identifies the applicable regulations to support the overall management of education in the province. It is within this act that school boards derive their existence. Boards work directly with the Minister of Education as both are elected officials. Superintendents work with the Assistant Deputy Minister as both are appointed (Alberta School Boards Association, 2017). As trustees are elected every four years in a general election they view their role as an elected official on par with the Minister of Education. Trustees are positioned below the Minister of Education with respect to authority. The Alberta Education Act (2020a) highlights the roles and responsibilities of trustees including their role as a fiduciary. The role of a trustee is to ensure the effective governance of a school jurisdiction and be accountable to the electorate. This is accomplished through the development and implementation of board policy and administrative procedures and then operating in congruence with them. Trustees can sometimes view this work beyond the scope of a board member and more along the lines of a politician. This can lead to trustees stepping outside the bounds of their legislated responsibilities and acting as an individual rather than part of the body corporate (Alberta School Boards Association, 2017). Additionally, trustees are political agents potentially representing different political spectrums. This adds another layer of complexity as trustees may believe that they must act in accordance to their political compass thus muddling an already delicate relationship (Saskatchewan School Boards Association, 2016).

Legislated responsibilities also extend to the superintendent. With the Ministerial Order released in 2017, the Minister of Education identified seven competencies captured in the

Superintendent Leadership Quality Standard (SLQS) that superintendents must be able to demonstrate as part of effectively leading their respective jurisdictions. (Alberta Education, 2020c). These include:

- building effective relationships
- modeling a commitment to professional learning
- visionary leadership
- leading learning
- ensuring First Nation, Metis and Inuit education for all students
- school authority operations and resources
- supporting effective governance

This is a change in the role of the superintendent as prior to the standard being enacted, the roles and responsibilities of the superintendent were identified through board policy and determined predominantly by the board (Alberta School Boards Association, 2017). The competencies include the expectation for superintendents to support effective governance practices. This is significant to this OIP as addressing the PoP and possible solutions will centre on this specific competency and the demonstration of it.

Economic Context

The operation of a jurisdiction effectively relies on a number of economic realities. Boards must operate in a fiscally sound manner. ECS does not have the large surpluses available in larger boards. Nor does it enjoy the economies of scale of larger boards. The jurisdiction is able to offer a competitive program of studies and despite not having large reserves is a top performing school jurisdiction in the province. Enrollment in the jurisdiction is growing, although at a slower rate than desired. Certain factors such as COVID-19 have affected many

families which have moved to larger centres in search of work. The impact of COVID-19 will be felt for some time.

Social Context

Trustees hold a unique position in the educational community (Saskatchewan School Boards Association, 2016). It is a complex position as trustees are politicians responsible for governing the jurisdiction, but at the same time, all current ECS trustees have a personal history of being former teachers with the exception of one who is a member of the clergy. This impacts their decision-making processes. This experience also applies additional pressure to the jurisdiction with respect to meeting the needs of staff and students alike. Specifically, trustees need to use a trustee lens rather than the personal lens that they are naturally more comfortable with when addressing governance issues. While having the ability to view the division as a teacher is useful in understanding an issue, trustees have to be able to switch over to a governance lens when making decisions. Trustees only have authority to make decisions when participating in a board meeting as a body corporate (Campbell & Fullan, 2019). This has been a problem on occasion where trustees have acted independently of the board or have focused on individual needs rather than the jurisdiction as a whole. When trustees act as individuals, it creates disunity and challenges the collaborative environment necessary to be effective (Ontario Public School Boards' Association, 2018).

Cultural Context

The staff and students in the jurisdiction contribute largely to the culture of the jurisdiction. As mentioned previously, many of the staff are former students that have returned to work in the jurisdiction. It is very common to have staff recognized for serving in excess of 30 years in the jurisdiction. This can be of tremendous benefit in the identification and support of a

strong culture of scholarship and student success. It can create difficulties in implementing change initiatives in the jurisdiction as staff can have a romanticized view of how things have operated. Significant change has not regularly occurred in the jurisdiction and has been challenged on occasion. Finally, the majority of staff employed by the jurisdiction are Catholic and trustees must be Catholic in order to run in an election. Our faith provides an incredibly strong and unifying force and direction in the jurisdiction. The Catholic Church's teaching on Catholic education acts as a framework of common values, beliefs, and purpose (Miller, 2006). Miller continues that Catholic educators believe that parents are the primary educators of their children. Additionally, there are five marks that identify the culture of Catholic schools. These include being inspired by a supernatural vision, being founded on a Christian anthropology, being animated by communion and community, being imbued with a Catholic world view, and finally, being sustained by gospel witness. To many, our faith is the single greatest contributor to our jurisdictional culture.

Vision, Mission, Values, Purpose and Goals

The work of ECS is perhaps best captured in its mission statement. It states that in we will work together with families, parishes, and community to provide the best Catholic Education possible. This is further embellished with a vision focused on a commitment to high quality education focused on the gospel and service in the image of Christ. These statements are readily identified in the values of the jurisdiction and are initially identified by the board (Campbell & Fullan, 2019). As a jurisdiction we believe that educators are called to participate in ministry to our students which is a central tenant of our church (Miller, 2006). We recognize that each child is created in the image of God. Through the living of our Catholic faith, traditions, and programs, we are able to best serve the whole child and not just an academic

obligation. This creates a significant moral obligation to our students and our staff to act in a manner in accordance to our beliefs and our faith (Goldburg, 2019). This has a direct impact on the operations of our jurisdiction and the board's approach to governance. The board has the responsibility to ensure that the operations of the jurisdiction are in alignment with the mission and vision (Ontario Public School Boards' Association, 2018). As the mission and vision are derived from the teachings of the church, the board is obligated to govern using the same set of values.

Organizational Structure

ECS employs a very traditional structure with respect to hierarchy and culture. The board members are the governors of the jurisdiction who are tasked with developing policy, hiring the superintendent, and delegating authority to the superintendent through policy. The Education Act indicates that the superintendent is the Chief Educational Officer and Chief Executive Officer for the jurisdiction (Alberta Education, 2020a). Every employee of the jurisdiction reports to the superintendent. Our board relies on a policy governance model approach to governing. As superintendent I am responsible for ensuring policy deliverables and generating procedure. This can present a challenge for both myself and the board. There is a battle between fiscal accountability, measuring success, and determining value as typified in the neoliberal view versus the Catholic view of developing the person as a whole (Buchanan & Chapman, 2014). The tenant of forming the whole child (Miller, 2006) is difficult to measure or collect data on. It is even more difficult to justify with respect to financial investment. This captures the complex nature of the work of Catholic boards and their superintendent. Conservative leadership must identify social standards and safeguard that all facets of education are congruent with societal expectations of the education system (Guttek, 2013). The author continues that neoconservatives

may take on a defensive posture towards more liberal values and approaches, which can result in a return to more traditional, accountability focused approach centred on results. Finally, Gutek posits that conservatives must resist liberal encroachment at all costs and must hold true to foundational values and beliefs. As we are a Catholic Board, who we are is based on our traditional teachings and values. As demonstrated above, this can provide a supportive role and yet make change difficult to implement. This is perhaps best exemplified when controversial topics arise. While tradition beliefs provide the response to the topic, those same views can make it difficult to expand the depth and breadth of discussion on a particular point (Buchanan & Chapman, 2014).

Organizational History

The Eparchy Catholic School jurisdiction came into existence on January 1, 1995. This jurisdiction resulted from a merger of the two existing Roman Catholic Separate School Districts, the first being established in 1911 and second jurisdiction to the west. A boundary expansion in January 2004 formed a new Roman Catholic District next to the jurisdiction. This District was amalgamated with ECS in 2007. Initially, the founding jurisdiction included many religious as part of the staffing contingent and virtually all staff were of the Catholic faith. Coupled with a lengthy history in the city, the majority of staff at ECS are also long serving staff. Additionally, a significant number of staff and most trustees are former students. This adds a layer of difficulty when engaging in change as many staff believe that we do not need to change. They do not wish to engage in changing what they are comfortable with, which is long standing practice and tradition.

Faith has been and always will form the cornerstone of a Catholic jurisdiction. While the wording of the mission statement may have changed over the last 100 years, what remains a

constant in a Catholic jurisdiction is the focus on developing the whole child. This includes supporting the development of the social, emotional, academic, and faith components which make up each individual student. Catholic school jurisdictions believe that parents are a child's primary teacher and that we play a supporting role in the education and development of the child (Miller, 2006). This has not changed since the inception of the ECS, and it serves to inform the mission, vision and values in which the jurisdiction currently operates.

Leadership Position and Lens Statement

This section of the organizational improvement plan highlights my role in the jurisdiction, the agency that exists within that role and my chosen approach to leadership in addressing the PoP. This provides the lens that I utilize when examining what needs to change, as well as determining which approach is best suited to realize the change that is needed.

Superintendents in Alberta have the inimitable responsibility of ensuring that each student in the jurisdiction they serve receives the best education possible (Goulet, 2021). While this is a very noble and significant responsibility, the power to transform this responsibility into a reality lies more in the relationships that I have as a superintendent (Wheatly, 2002) rather than simply authority delegated to me by my board. Although I am the Chief Executive Officer of the board, I do not have the ability to direct my board even though their actions can impact the overall success of our students. Additionally, there is a clear and defined correlation between the effectiveness of school board governance practices and student success (Delagardelle, 2008). The power that I have to ensure student success is derived from influence rather than authority. While I do have the authority to direct staff, for the purposes of this OIP, my focus is on the ability to influence the board I serve. Philosophically I believe that it is important in order to mobilize the collaborative process. This is accomplished through relationship building with the

understanding that relationships are the foundation to building trust with the people that you engage with (Duignan, 2014). The relationship between myself and the board needs to be one based on trust as this will be the dynamo needed to advance through the improvement process. Trust is a building block to a solid, relational foundation (Tschannen-Moran, 2014). A solid foundation is essential to initiate the improvement process. Moving a board through the improvement process towards becoming a more effective governing body is captured and detailed in the SLQS.

Competent Leadership

When the Ministerial Order was released in 2017 the necessary competencies that need to be demonstrated by superintendents were identified (Alberta Education, 2020c). The SLQS codifies those competencies. A significant competency and one which is often neglected is supporting effective governance. Supporting effective governance necessitates leadership. A theory of leadership which I believe supports effective board governance utilizing influence over authority is the leadership from the middle approach. As my leadership approach will be key to the implementation of this OIP this leadership style warrants closer inspection.

Leadership in any system as Levin (2013) asserts must be engaged in a cycle of unceasing advancement, which necessitates a confident approach. Levin suggests that it is possible for educational systems to enter into a state of continuous advancement if the leadership is confident in their approach. He does caution that over confidence can lead to problems and therefore needs to be approached pragmatically. Additionally, he illuminates the need for trust as an indispensable component of the leadership and improvement process. As a final note, Levin highlights the significance of the setting that a leader is functioning in, which includes community, administrative, and historic contemplations. I believe that confidence is both a

philosophical and practical necessity in order to lead. While you can be a leader and not have the confidence to make difficult decisions or challenge the status quo your effectiveness will be limited. Additionally, the leadership approach chosen must be authentic to the leader. Initially the servant leadership approach appeared to be a natural fit for me given that I am working in a Catholic school jurisdiction. Upon closer reflection of this approach to leadership I find that I do not default to the desire to serve and develop the desire in others to serve as well in my daily practice (Northouse, 2019). To engage in any leadership approach therefore requires the leader to authentically engage in the tenants central to the model. One such approach that resonates with me is leadership from the middle.

Leadership From the Middle

Leadership from the middle as coined by Hargreaves and Braun (2010) illuminates the key role that boards and superintendents play in generating the strategy and momentum necessary to introduce and sustain change to the educational system. With respect to the educational system, the government and related Ministry are at the apex of the system while schools and teachers form the base (Fullan, 2015). Fullan shares that it is superintendents and boards that are in fact in the middle. It is this key position which allows for superintendents and boards to utilize the strengths of their professional networks to interpret policy and direction from the government and implement it with the collective wisdom of the entire educational system (Hargreaves & Braun, 2010). The authors also shared that there tends to be more commitment to engage in strategy as this group has the ability to enact the change that they wish to see. Leadership from the middle supports effective governance as it utilizes influence rather than coercion to address the needs of the jurisdiction (Campbell & Fullan, 2019). As a superintendent this leadership approach defines my agency with respect to both my role and my

ability to influence change. Previous superintendents have tried to initiate significant change which lead to a number of superintendents being released in a short amount of time and a teacher lockout. Their chosen approach was to direct through the authority of their position. This generated resentment and hostility from teachers and ultimately the board. The last two superintendents prior to my arrival engaged in a status quo approach in order to stabilize relationships within the jurisdiction. These circumstances leave me in a vulnerable position with respect to initiating change or a departure from a status quo leadership approach. In particular, any direction or authoritative action may result in staff and the board reacting based on their prior negative experience rather than a reaction based on the current context. Addressing this concern will require creating an environment based on trust in order to maintain a positive environment within the jurisdiction. It is important to be intentional and authentic when engaged in leadership and it is akin to being a gardener. While you can't force a seed to germinate, you can create a positive environment which will support growth (Irvine, 2018). An element of humility is needed when leading others and is one of the most important skills required with respect to the ability to influence others (Collins, 2001). This is of particular importance when working in a Catholic jurisdiction.

Catholicity

Catholic superintendents must act in accordance with the foundational teachings of the Catholic Church. This is both a key element and a contractual requirement as faith is not an addition to leadership in a Catholic jurisdiction (Miller, 2006). This demonstrates the context that a Catholic superintendent operates in. With this in mind, the ethos of a Catholic school division and the significance of faith needing to be imbued within my work, influences the way I choose to lead. As shared earlier, when the right environment exists a seed can flourish (Irvine, 2018). In

addressing the PoP, a governance mindset must be developed in order to create the environment for effective governance practices to grow and mature. Leading from the middle supports the board by helping them develop a governance mindset through engaging in collaboration, deep learning, and influence. It must be approached in an authentic manner which meets the requirements of the jurisdiction and addresses the political and cultural circumstances that all school division exist in.

Leadership Problem of Practice

After the implementation of the SLQS in 2019 (Alberta Education, 2020c), superintendents are experiencing difficulty in providing information, advice, and support to their boards with respect to effective governance practices (College of Alberta School Superintendents, 2019). This is verified when trustees or senior administration are unable to explain what effective governance practices are, or even provide a rudimentary definition of governance. Examples include trustees not understanding the difference between governance and management, trustees circumventing procedure to obtain a decision that they want, and trustees operating outside of the board room in an official capacity.

The Gap

Boards recognize that there is a degree of uncertainty with respect to the roles of boards and superintendents (Bradshaw & Osborne, 2010). This leads to difficulty in governing effectively. Governance is a process of making decisions that set direction, engage stakeholders, and define responsibilities (Seel & Gibbons, 2012). Additionally, governance is the use of power, guidelines, and boundaries to achieve its goals (Gill, Flynn & Reissing, 2005). These definitions are not universal. In fact, there is very little research regarding governance, which can have a limiting effect on the understanding of what governance is (Johnson, 2005). This curbs

the ability to support the growth of a board's effectiveness which can have a negative impact overall on the jurisdiction it serves (Waters & Marzano, 2006). There needs to be a continuous process of board and superintendent development embedded into the governance model (Leithwood, 2010). The author continues that this process generates the professional relationships and collaborative synergy necessary for good governance to exist and grow. In many cases the difficulty of engaging in board professional development is compounded when trustees may feel that their employee, the superintendent, is instructing them on how to govern. This is exemplified in the case of the superintendent being evaluated by the board yet the superintendent is providing feedback on the board's effectiveness or potentially lack thereof. Additionally, boards are often unaware of the direct correlation between student success and effective governance (Delagardelle, 2008). There is a direct connection between effective governance practices and student success in that the more effective the board's governance practices are the more successful students will be (BCSTA, 2019). While boards may not directly influence students and their learning, the decisions that they make impact the environments necessary for student success (Delagardelle, 2008). Thus, it is vitally important for boards to be engaged in governance practices which are effective.

Effective governance practices rely on an effective governance model (Carver & Carver, 2009). The Alberta School Boards Association (ASBA) created the Governing Through Engagement and Collaboration Model (G-TEC) which is the most commonly used governance model in the province (Alberta School Boards Association, 2019). It is important to note that regardless of the model which is used attention must be placed on context (Bradshaw & Osborne, 2010). Boards do need to understand the model that they operate within, nevertheless effective

governance relies on other factors such as understanding the moral imperative of the jurisdiction and working collaboratively with the superintendent (Campbell & Fullan, 2019).

The Problem of Practice

As mentioned earlier, as superintendent I am the chief educational officer and chief executive officer of the jurisdiction which I serve. Through the SLQS and the Education Act I am charged with the responsibility of supporting effective board governance practices. This is not as simple as it might first appear. To provide support to my board will require a collaborative vision, a great deal of trust, and a shared understanding of what effective governance practices are encapsulated in the model through which they govern. This role is made more complex with the understanding that I may be viewed as instructing my employer and also the lack of preparation of both the board and myself around understanding governance structures and related approaches. Careful consideration must be given to how best approach supporting effective governance practices. Trustees must be able to see the benefit and have a desire to improve. Trustees may find it difficult to be told how to improve rather than engage in a generative process in which they collaborate and define their own local approach. Additionally, navigating this problem without being evaluative may prove to be challenging. A clear gap exists between the board's perception of what the roles of the board and the superintendent look like versus what the roles of the board and superintendent need to be in order to develop a high functioning board focused on student success. This gap is exacerbated when the SLQS demands that superintendents engage in specific responsibilities and trustees try to engage in the same work. From the perspective of superintendent, the problem of practice surfaces in the question, how do you support the expansion of trustee and superintendent efficacy in developing an effective approach to governance?

Framing the Problem of Practice

Approaching the development of an effective approach to governance requires a framework to operate within. The governance core provides such a framework (Campbell & Fullan, 2019). Here the two authors examine the mindsets required of both trustees and superintendents, coherence, governance culture, collaboration, governance jobs, and tools to support governance. Central to this mindset is coherence theory as proposed by Fullan and Quinn (2015). Coherence theory focuses on developing a significant understanding of our work that is shared mutually among all members. The governance core framework does not supersede the governance model utilized in my jurisdiction. Rather it supports it in developing key understandings and approaches. When utilizing a coherent approach, boards become flexible and adaptable to change and therefore are better able to achieve success as they define it (Bradshaw & Osborne, 2010). Clearly the governance model utilized is secondary to the approach to governing that trustees use within it to achieve success (Campbell & Fullan, 2019).

In order to understand how the board of ECS is in a position where trustees may not completely understand the model within which it operates and its own approach to governance, its history must be examined. It is important to examine the historical differences both locally and provincially with respect to school boards and the provincial government in Alberta. Political shifts as well as the structure in which the board and jurisdiction operates will be examined. Lastly, this OIP is accompanied and informed by coherence theory. Coherence theory provides for trustees to develop a common, deep understanding of why they are engaging in their work and what their work is about. In addressing the PoP, this OIP is in essence about coherence theory in application.

Historical Differences

There is a significant struggle between publicly funded education and a board's desire to have local control over education in Alberta (Brandon, 2016). This is further exacerbated by policy and regulation being developed by the government but having to be enforced by local school boards. One of the major tensions between boards and their provincial counterpart is the perceived wearing down of local autonomy (Seel & Gibbons, 2012). This tension increased when in 1994 the Government of Alberta removed a board's right to taxation of its constituents (Government of Alberta, 1994). Many boards viewed this as a direct assault on autonomy (Howell, 2013). To support regaining autonomy, the Alberta School Boards Association (2019) created and recommended that school boards in Alberta adopt the G-TEC Policy Model. The first adoption occurred in 2000, with most boards in the province adopting the new model within a few years. The model uses policy development to work within a provincial legislative framework in order to carry out the work of the board. The model, after being adopted provincially, helped to defend board autonomy by having 60 out of 62 boards govern in the same manner, with similar policy direction and be complicit with legislation and regulation (Alberta School Boards Association, 2019). While the model utilized in Alberta may have survived for over twenty years, the understanding of the model and its application in many circumstances has not.

While the G-TEC model has had a long-term influence in our jurisdiction, other factors also contribute to the historical context. The Calgary Diocese has a great deal of influence in our jurisdiction. Additionally, it is very common to have students who have attended one of our schools return as teachers. Not surprisingly, we have many long-term employees, many of which have served the jurisdiction in excess of 30 years. This has developed a strong sense of culture

and family within the jurisdiction. It also can create road blocks at times when initiating change. Many do not see the need for change since things have been working so well for so long. Finally, many staff have become comfortable with their environment and may not view the rewards of change worth the risk. It is when addressing contextual issues such as this that a coherent approach is needed.

Political and Structural Frames

The four-frame approach was created to support the understanding of organizations and how they function (Reinholz & Apkarian, 2018). The frames are identified as structural, human resource, political, and symbolic (Bolman & Deal, 2008). I have specifically chosen the structural frame and political frame to help best understand the context in which the board and I operate in. The structural frame, as Bolman and Deal (2008) suggest examines the design of an organization and how this impacts its effectiveness. The political frame similarly examines organizational process as a political exercise. When combined, these two frames will support the core foundation of my OIP.

Political Frame

Boards of education in Alberta and Canada have experienced a tumultuous journey over the last few decades (Ontario Public School Boards' Association, 2018). Questions of whether or not boards have any value continue to surface whenever discussion of funding or provincial approaches to education are discussed (Howell, 2013). Additionally, as the needs of stakeholders change and the demands placed on board increase, the expectations placed on boards have evolved (Bradshaw & Osborne, 2013). This has led to uncertainty and to some extent disarray on many boards as the context that boards work in has changed, but trustees have not adapted their practice. Leithwood (2010) continues that more than ever, boards must now engage with the

Ministry of Education to maintain effectiveness and relevance. This includes the ability to have input into a wide range of areas including curriculum, legislation, and collective bargaining. This adaptation in practice may be more difficult for boards to accomplish as it requires a comprehensive understanding that many simply do not have. Part of the difficulty may result from boards not recognizing that they are leaders from the middle and not the top. Leadership from the middle as discussed earlier, utilizes the collective wisdom from the networks of divisions, trustees, and superintendents to provide upward support and influence of Ministerial initiatives and work within the local context of the schools served to provide support to staff and students (Fullan, 2015). By recognizing that they are middle level leaders boards can develop their ability to govern effectively. By engaging in a coherent approach to their work, trustees will develop the capacity to sustain the effectiveness of their governance practices (Campbell & Fullan, 2019).

Structural Frame

All Alberta school boards have utilized a CEO model since the implementation of the 1988 Alberta School Act (College of Alberta School Superintendents, 2019). The Alberta Education Act indicated that superintendents would now be both chief executive officers and chief educational officers. As superintendent of ECS I am the only employee of the board. The board of education consists of five locally elected trustees which all belong to a single ward. This is a typical board structure in the province with the only variables being the number of trustees and the number of employees which report to the superintendent. The structure of an organization must not be taken for granted as it can have a direct impact on the success of the organization (Boleman & Deal, 2008). The authors propose that as the structural frame relates to strategy, goals, systems, and procedures. Furthermore, there must be a clarification of roles and

responsibilities in order to be most effective. Finally, the authors conclude that the correct structure for an organization is dependent on the context in which it operates. Given that this is a task-oriented frame, this area may have the largest impact on board effectiveness.

With respect to the context of Alberta, most boards including ECS utilize the G-TEC policy model (Alberta School Boards Association, 2019). This provides another structural element to support the work of the board. The model, as highlighted by the ASBA, relies on the development of core policies which set the direction for boards to follow (Alberta School Boards Association, 2019). It is within this direction that the separation of duties and procedure occurs, which is a centre piece of the structural frame as conceived by Bolman and Deal (2008). The difficulty with the G-TEC model is that while it provides a framework upon which a board can be structured, it does not act as a guide for effective governance practices. Relying on structure alone, the model assumes that by following a set of policy and procedure boards will ultimately be successful. Because of this, boards are left to their own devices to develop an understanding of what effective governance is, how it impacts student success and, how do they generate a governance culture on the board.

Significant Organizational Theories

When simply relying on the G-TEC model, boards will invariable interpret and develop their own understanding of governance and their own culture. This will also be influenced by internal and external factors which can change as political, societal, and social contexts change. Boards therefore need to be able to adapt to contextual changes (Verkerk, 2019). Additionally, they must conduct their work collaboratively as a coherent, well-informed body (Fullan & Quinn, 2015). Underpinning this OIP is a foundation based on coherence theory and its

application. When utilized it forms a conceptual roadmap to guide my OIP especially when used in conjunction with an appropriate leadership framework.

Contingency Theory

The contingency theory of leadership was developed by Fred Edward Fiedler in 1964 in his work “A contingency model of leadership effectiveness” (Fiedler, 1964). This approach is similar to that of Hersey and Blanchard’s situational approach (Northouse, 2019). Additionally, contingency theory focuses on the traits of a leader and the context in which they are operating (Verkerk, 2019). Contingency theory proposes that if boards can adequately adapt to the circumstances as they change they will experience success (Bradshaw & Osborne, 2010). Furthermore, the authors suggest that the structure of a board will be impacted by the context in which it operates. A relatively stable environment they contend yields a stable and procedural approach to governing while uncertainty will require a more flexible approach to governance. The contingent approach is important to my OIP because it focuses on the ability of leadership to be flexible and adapt to the local context and environment. An effective response of educational leaders and their boards to the various contexts in which they operate can lead to student success (Hofman, Hofman & Guldemon, 2002). Once again, this fits well with addressing my PoP in that the focus is developing an understanding of the governance model utilized in order for the board to engage in the improvement process. Improvement requires flexibility and a willingness to change. While I did initially consider this theory, I did find it to be somewhat limited in scope. The need for the board and superintendent to be flexible is incredibly important as demonstrated above. In my opinion a theory with a wider scope that will have a unifying factor is needed. As a result of research, coherence theory appears to be a much more appropriate fit as it incorporates a much broader scope.

Coherence Theory

As proposed by Fullan and Quinn (2015), coherence theory provides a framework relying on four key components that when executed synchronously support effective leadership. The authors indicate that the components include focusing direction, cultivating collaborative cultures, deepening learning, and accountability. Focusing direction centres on developing goals and utilizing the entire organization to achieve them; cultivating collaborative cultures revolves around creating the conditions to foster collaboration; deep learning emphasizes developing a deeper understanding of the work while accountability revolves around internal accountability and understanding how this impacts external measures (Fullan et al., 2017). The theory defines coherence as being a mutual, deep level of understanding about why we do what we do and for what purpose (Fullan & Quinn, 2015). This collaborative level of understanding is key to the board developing effective governance practices. The four components then play a supporting role in developing, maintaining, and enhancing coherence once established. The authors conclude that while the theory provides a framework it does not provide a roadmap. Brown (2006) shares of the importance of a roadmap and that boards must establish this in order to maximize effectiveness. This is echoed by Johnson (2005) highlighting the importance of creating learning and decision-making structures. The coherence framework informs my PoP by focusing my efforts and those of the trustees on creating deep, mutual understandings of what effective governance practices are and why. For a board to be effective the relationship between board and district leadership is inextricably linked together (Campbell & Fullan, 2019). Boards, the authors contend must be unified in a collaborative approach with a common purpose. This must be accompanied with a close working relationship with the superintendent, the heart of what they identify as a governance mindset. This theory, although intended for district wide

application, can be distilled initially to support the work of the board which then in turn supports the work of staff in the division and ultimately leading to student success.

Guiding Questions Emerging from the Leadership Problem of Practice

As a superintendent, engaging trustees in developing effective governance practices may not initially appear to be challenging. When this issue is examined closely, there are a number of questions which generate the PoP.

What Constitutes Effective Governance?

What does effective governance look like when a board is engaged in effective governance practices? The most common approach to school board governance is through a policy model (Sheppard et al., 2013). While a policy model approach continues to be popular, it does not positively correlate with board effectiveness overall (Nobbie & Brudney, 2003). Ethical decision making is a source of good governance; however, ethical decision making is subject to trustees making a choice to act ethically, which does not provide a consistent approach to effective governance (Ontario Public School Boards' Association, 2018). What is needed is a framework that provides an opportunity for trustees and myself to develop a coherent approach to effective governance practices by collaboratively working through the process to identify, learn, and employ the practices which will enhance student success (Campbell et al., 2021).

What are the Impacts of the Relationship With the Only Employee?

The most important relationship that trustees have as a board is with the superintendent (Alberta School Boards Association, 2017). Through delegation many responsibilities are deferred to the superintendent but the board retains the responsibility of providing overall direction to the superintendent and by extension the jurisdiction. As the only employee of the board I have a special relationship with the board that can be leveraged to initiate change. Using

this leverage may have an impact that may be positive or negative. My leverage with the board is one based on trust. Trust is critical to engaging in the change process (Duignan, 2014). The challenge here is navigating this complex initiative with the board while ensuring that I minimize any ethical concerns.

How do you Develop a Culture of Governance?

A third issue emerges as municipal elections occur every four years and with the election comes the opportunity for new trustees to join the board. There are varied reasons for candidates to run from a board both positive and negative (Mountford, 2004). Much of this the author continues, is based on the amount of perceived power the individual believes they will gain through election. There is a danger when candidates are elected on a platform to solve perceived issues as this provides the opportunity for trustees to shift from a governance focus to a management focus. Based on over fifteen years of personal experience working with boards, new trustees often believe that they have more power to enact change than they actually have. During this time of transition and welcoming new trustees onto the board much work must be done to develop a deep understanding of the role of the board and of effective governance practices (Ontario Public School Boards' Association, 2018). The need to have an established culture of governance is critical to the onboarding of new trustees as they are able to more easily adjust to already established practice (Campbell & Fullan, 2019). The challenge here is how does a superintendent initiate this work? A governance culture requires a governance mindset (Campbell & Fullan, 2019). A governance mindset demands an essential understanding of all operational elements of the jurisdiction. The authors conclude that there exists a positive relationship between a superintendent purposefully engaging with the board to develop a

governance mindset and overall jurisdictional effectiveness. This however requires a desire and a vision for change.

Leadership-Focused Vision for Change

School boards were formed to govern localized education yet very little research has occurred regarding what that means (Campbell & Fullan, 2019). The authors suggest that education has become ever more complex, needing effective governance practices, yet very few have stopped to reflect on what effective governance is. Through the SLQS, the Minister of Education in Alberta identifies which competencies are required to be demonstrated by superintendents. The competencies include supporting effective governance (Alberta Education, 2020c), yet there remains little common understand among superintendents as to what effective governance means, including myself. Additionally, there is similarly little understanding of the impact of effective governance. Both superintendents and trustees tend to focus on policy and governmental relations rather than on governance (Sheppard et al., 2013). There is increasing support for the notion that board governed school districts make a positive difference in the education of students and their success (Leithwood, 2010). Canada's education system is one of the best in the world and is traditionally based on a policy governance model approach (Sheppard et al., 2013). Furthermore, governance models can connect board members to the larger public. This allows for a localized and informed decision-making process which meets the needs of local constituents. Finally, the authors contend that an effective governance approach can support policy development which is focused on the needs of the students they serve rather than provincially directed initiatives. School boards need to develop a process which deepens their understanding of governance for students and the jurisdiction to fully experience the benefits of a governance model. Difficulties exist where trustees and their superintendent may

not completely understand their respective roles. Specifically, a gap exists between the board's perception of what the roles of the board and the superintendent look like versus what the roles of the board and superintendent need to be in order to develop a high functioning board focused on student success. As the superintendent, I am charged with the responsibility of supporting effective governance. As discussed earlier I believe that this must be generated from educational networks, utilizing established relationships. The leadership from the middle approach effectively supports this process by harnessing the combined learning of existing educational networks (Hargreaves & Braun, 2010). Trustees need to understand that I do not view the governance of the jurisdiction as being problematic but rather my intention is to engage in a process of continuous improvement to increase the success of our students. This process will require trustees to adapt and change which will move them out of their comfort zone. To facilitate this process, a great deal of trust will be required of both myself and my board.

A Foundation of Trust

To help trustees feel comfortable with changing their practice, I will have to ensure that I am working closely with them, keeping them informed and continually fostering positive relationships. It will be an important part of the process to honour the local context of the jurisdiction as well as the political arena that Alberta school boards operate in. It is critical therefore to develop a relationship based on trust in order to support the board in becoming more effective (Duignan, 2014). The desire to have a trusting relationship with your board must come from a sincere desire to do so as it is a key driver of change. Essential to the foundation necessary to build on is trust (Tschannen-Moran, 2014). Without a solid foundation, the governance process will be based on policy and procedure instead of focused on stimulating

student success. To achieve success several priorities must be addressed in order to enable effective governance practices.

Priorities for Change

In order to support effective governance practices, there are three areas that a superintendent must focus on (College of Alberta School Superintendents, 2019). They include utilizing a governance model, ongoing board development, and helping trustees engage with the broader community and stakeholder groups to inform decision making. The College contends that this focus will support a board in becoming effective governors in their chosen governance model.

Within the province of Alberta there are some jurisdictions which are considered to utilize an effective approach to governance and some that continue to struggle (The Alberta Teachers' Association, 2016). While there are differences between the roles of trustees and the superintendent there does exist overlap (Brown, 2006). It is in this area of overlap where clarification of roles, responsibilities, and expectations are made. It is the role of the superintendent to implement change and it is necessary that the board works collaboratively to ensure the change is embedded in their practice (Brown, 2006). There is a need for clarity of roles as a significant element in its governance model (Alberta School Boards Association, 2019). This process will require a great deal of trust between myself and the trustees in order to be candid in discussing roles, responsibilities, and expectations. As mentioned earlier, this will be an ambitious undertaking which will rely on strong relationships as trust will be required to begin the professional development of trustees and overall level of coherence.

Relationship building will be a preface to building the internal understanding of trustees in terms of what governance means and how it relates to the governance model we use and to

student success. It is critically important for boards to be engaged in a continual process of improvement (Leithwood, 2010). This continual process will yield many benefits. When trustees understand their roles and what governance is they tend to remain as governors and avoid stepping into management areas (Freeman, 2019). In my opinion this is also a benefit of developing coherence. Coherence in turn can help the board keep its focus on monitoring student outcomes. Not only do trustees need to focus on student outcomes but they must understand how the system attains those outcomes (Freeman, 2019). Additionally, Freeman determines that while board training can achieve many benefits it will require a commitment from trustees. It will require an ongoing pledge resulting in a new paradigm of board training. Freeman concludes that board members need to realize that their conduct makes a difference. Whether it is in board meetings or how they relate to one another, all of these areas need to be scrutinized if the real revolution required to support students in their success going to happen.

Student success can be defined in many ways. Trustees will need to understand what success means to students, parents, and the larger communities served. Research demonstrates that how trustees relate to one another as well as how they relate to the community is directly connected to student success (Saatcioglu et al., 2011). For boards to relate better to one another, the authors suggest that trustees need to focus on the sharing of information, developing trust amongst each other, and having a shared vision. The authors continue that positive trustee relationships are necessary in order to effectively engage those they serve externally. How well trustees relate to one another is dependent on trust with each other, which in turn enables them to interact effectively with the public.

In order for trustees to engage with the public effectively they need to have a shared vision of education and student success. This common vision demonstrates to the public that they

are working collaboratively and that they are taking a stable, cohesive approach to governing. A school board's vision utilizes input from the community it serves and identifies objectives for successful student outcomes (Ontario Public School Boards' Association, 2018). The board's vision therefore is present in all aspects of effective governing. In order for trustees to effectively govern, they need to involve the community (Brandon, 2016). Brandon continues that it is through the engagement of community members by the board that an ethos of success in a jurisdiction is generated and then reflected in its vision. This understanding is central to the G-TEC Governance Model (Alberta School Boards Association, 2019). In order for boards to effectively meet their obligations as identified in the Alberta Education Act, they must utilize the strengths of the community they serve in order to govern effectively in this model and ultimately generate student success (Alberta School Boards Association, 2019). It is through the utilization of a formal governance model, ongoing board development, and helping trustees engage with stakeholder groups to inform decision making that effective governance can be actioned.

Organizational Change Readiness

During my interview for the position of Superintendent I was asked how I would support the board and their governance practices as required in the SLQS. I shared with the board that this was in fact the focus of my OIP. Their question does not readily provide evidence of either the recognition that they need to change nor their willingness to engage in change. As well, it does not indicate that the board is aware of the impact that governance practices can have on student achievement and success (BCSTA, 2019).

When we look at change we realize that we are talking about modifying culture more than structure (Fullan, 2009). Structural change, particularly when boards and superintendents engage in it collaboratively can be a challenge. Nevertheless, structures can impact change. This

struggle is compounded as trustees may not work well with each other or with the superintendent (Alberta School Boards Association, 2019). A significant responsibility of trustees is to ensure that their priorities remain the focus of the work that a superintendent engages in (Lashway, 2002). Again, this can be challenging as sometimes the priorities of the board can be in conflict with individual trustee wants.

Due to the questions posed during my interview, I would suggest that this is evidence that the trustees are willing to engage in change. In addition, internal candidates did apply for the superintendent position. I believe that because an internal candidate was not chosen, this provides yet another indicator that the board desires change to some degree. Notwithstanding, as the Ministerial Order came into effect on September 1, 2019 (Alberta Education, 2020c); superintendents must demonstrate all of the competencies identified within. Every superintendent will now have to demonstrate their ability to support the effective governance practices of the boards they serve. This in part helps to identify why change is necessary. In fact, it is critical to understand why there is a need for change prior to being able to develop a vision for the future (Cawsey et al., 2016). Additionally, the authors suggest that organizational readiness for change can be determined by the previous experience with change and how malleable and adaptable is the organizations culture. The commitment of leadership to change and how confident are stakeholders in the leadership of the organization impacts readiness as well. Our readiness for change therefore will be examined in the context of risk (previous experience), structures (adaptability), politics and power (commitment to change), and organizational culture (confidence in leadership). This examination will demonstrate that my organization is ready to engage in change.

Readiness

Prior to engaging in change, it is important for organizations to be ready. Identifying the reasons for change, identifying the intended results of change, and being committed to the change process all must be in place prior to initiating change (Cawsey et al., 2016). The authors continue that leadership needs to be able to describe why change is needed and what a potential future will look like after the change is implemented. Contextual factors such as stakeholder engagement and the type of data you have access to inform your decision making must be taken into consideration. Lastly, the senior leaders in the jurisdiction must understand what their roles and responsibilities will be when engaged in the change process and how their actions will benefit the process overall.

Risk

As superintendent, I am one of the main change agents in the jurisdiction. This is in part due to a deep understanding of the organization, related systems, as well as the culture of the jurisdiction (Cawsey et al., 2016). The authors continue that leaders can be both change drivers and enablers, and that resistance to change can be challenging yet provide unique opportunities. Change is rick with confusion and risk (Holdsworth & Maynes, 2017). The risks for a superintendent in this area can be substantial. A failed attempt at change could end in contract termination. King and Stevenson (2017) highlight the importance for the relationship between top down and bottom up leadership to be cohesive. To initiate change there must be coherence between the planned change and the values and beliefs of the organization (Cawsey et al., 2016). Additionally, coherence must be division wide in order for any change initiative to be successful (Campbell & Fullan, 2019). The jurisdiction has experienced failure of change initiated by superintendents. Yet in the last five years the experience in the jurisdiction has been positive,

resulting in year over year increases in student performance on provincial examinations. This was a result of a change in academic priorities and a focus on literacy, numeracy, and educational leadership. I believe that this provides an excellent starting point to continue implementing change in the jurisdiction as the board and stakeholders have witnessed the results of change.

Structures

Structures also can impact on our change initiatives. One example is our administrative procedures. Our administrative procedures have an influential bearing on change because they act as a control mechanism on all employees working in the jurisdiction. The structures which oversee the actions in a school can have a significant impression on effectiveness (Sheerens, 2015). Leaders involved in change must be cognizant of the environmental factors that exist in their organization (Cawsey et al., 2016). Administrative procedures need to be developed to address the numerous needs identified in order to support change. Furthermore, they must be developed in a collaborative manner which not only supports the will of the board but also empowers staff to attain the anticipated outcomes necessary for student success. The process for developing administrative procedures is highly collaborative with input into the content and design being provided from all stakeholders. Additionally, stakeholders are able to initiate change to the administrative procedures which ensures a level of comfort that the procedures are malleable and adaptable.

Politics and Power

My board's use of power cannot always be used as a road map for effective governance or student success. Nor can it be a source of confidence in terms of commitment to change. Due to rank, individuals holding a place of authority can sometimes depend on their authority as a

source power which may be viewed as coercive (Mittal & Elias, 2016). While it may not be intentional, coercion can have a detrimental impact on the change process. This result, as Holdsworth and Maynes (2017) contend, in decreased support from staff and an unwillingness to work collaboratively. This approach to power will only last for a short time in terms of effectiveness (Cawsey et al., 2016). As superintendent therefore, I must help the board focus on governance activities to be truly effective. Additionally, I will have to provide support to staff facing coercive actions.

Politics is the use of power to attain a desired result (Cawsey et al., 2016). In my context I work with a number of long serving staff. Because of tenure in the division, staff at times are able to exploit corporate knowledge to influence and sometime secure a decision that they would like from the board. This use of knowledge power can cause a derailment in change initiatives (Cawsey et al., 2016). To resolve this problem, I must initially build rapport and trust with the staff that I work with. I have to acknowledge the strength and value inherent in this corporate knowledge while developing trust. In addition, ensuring transparency and working through multiple stakeholders will eventually reduce the negative impact of this political dynamic. This will also have an impact on the culture of our jurisdiction.

Organizational Culture

Culture can affect organizational readiness for change. The board I work with is comprised of five trustees of which four are former teachers. This poses a unique issue with respect to change in that many of the trustees are former employees. As addressed earlier, many employees do not see the need to change when the jurisdiction is successful. It is important to note that a board's common beliefs and approaches to decision making can hamper the change process (Cawsey et al., 2016). This can interfere with the jurisdiction's level of readiness to

engage in change. Addressing this element will require a purposeful approach to developing a governance mindset among trustees. As a result, trustees will begin to see themselves as governors rather than former teachers looking after colleagues. With a renewed approach to governance the board's confidence in my leadership as well as their own leadership will grow. The outcome of this should be an increased performance of the jurisdiction and overall student success.

Chapter One Conclusion

The SLQS has been in effect since September 1, 2019. For superintendents desiring to demonstrate capacity in supporting governance, the challenge for them will be to develop a better understanding of what effective governance is. The roles and responsibilities of the superintendent and the board are diverse, although there are areas that appear to overlap (Brown, 2006). It will be impossible for the superintendent to ignore the political realities of the job yet this cannot be the only thing that holds the attention of the superintendent (Levin, 2013). Demonstrating this competency is important not only for meeting the requirements of the SLQS but also for creating improvement within the jurisdiction, ultimately improving the learning and success of students. How a board engages in this work is important due to the impact of governance on student learning (Saskatchewan School Boards Association, 2016). Boards can have a significant impact on student success (National School Boards Association, 2014). It is imperative therefore that the board is committed to developing effective governance practices in order to secure it (Campbell et al., 2021). Based on my review of my board and the jurisdiction, it is clear that my organization is ready to engage in this change.

Chapter Two: Planning and Development

The previous chapter identified that my PoP centres on the issue of the Superintendent and trustees need to develop efficacy in developing effective governance practices. More specifically, a gap exists between the board's perception of what the roles of the board and the superintendent look like versus what the roles of the board and superintendent need to be in order to develop a high functioning board focused on student success. In this chapter I will discuss how my chosen leadership approach will move change forward with respect to my PoP. This will include explaining my specific approach for leading change, and analyzing my organization in terms of change readiness. Part of this discussion will also include the ethical issues that may arise from the change process and how I intend to address each issue. Three possible solutions to my PoP will be discussed as well as the leadership approach which will be utilized.

Leadership Approach to Change

Many of the current leadership theories and approaches have been developed decades ago. While this does not immediately render them obsolete it may be difficult to utilize older models of leadership in order to address new problems of practice. Initially, I had contemplated servant leadership to support my approach to change. Upon reflection, I do not authentically relate to this approach, even though as a Catholic leader it would appear to be a logical fit. A new leadership theory, developed in Canada, specifically for education is leadership from the middle.

Leadership From the Middle

Developed by Hargreaves and Braun (2010), leadership from the middle theory suggests that superintendents and trustees can have a significant impact on change and student learning. In fact, the authors suggest that middle leaders can generate and maintain the inertia required for

change. Leadership from the middle is comprised of three interdependent concepts (Hargreaves et al., 2018). The authors continue that the concepts include philosophy, structure, and culture. Philosophy recognizes what effective educational practice looks like, particularly at the teacher level and how best to enable teachers to be effective. Structure, the authors contend, utilizes the power of interdisciplinary teams to generate success. This can include many individuals from many different types of organizations which come together to support students in a manner in which hierarchy and procedure do not interfere with the work of the group. Finally, a culture of embedded professional collaboration focuses on candid conversations, built on a foundation of trust amongst professional peers (Hargreaves et al., 2018). It is through this collaboration that enables professional sharing and deeper learning. These three elements form the basis of leadership from the middle and connect directly with the concept of system coherence discussed in Chapter One in that the three elements engage leaders in the shared depth of understanding which is central to coherence. Additionally, this approach relies on influence, rather than coercion (Hargreaves et al., 2018). When you force someone to do something, you do not need to have a shared understanding. My agency provides me with the ability to direct through position and legislation. Direction is not leadership and is the opposite of a coherent, effective approach. In order for effective governance to exist the board must be unified in a collaborative approach with a common purpose and a governance mindset (Campbell & Fullan, 2019). The primary focus of leadership from the middle is to have the middle focus on systemic objectives and school level needs vis a vis the three main elements (Fullan, 2015). This theory supports the work of the board in many ways and is applicable to school boards and superintendents when the entire education system is examined (Campbell & Fullan, 2019). It is important to highlight that within an educational context; most would recognize leadership from the middle as being in the

domain of the school principal. It is therefore important to contextualize this discussion as it relates to the provincial educational system. In this context, the Minister of Education and the Ministry of Education serve as the formal leaders of education in the province of Alberta. Staff at the school level are working directly with students and the community stakeholders. Therefore, the board and superintendent exist in the middle between these two groups. When applied to the schools in this manner, Campbell and Fullan (2019) share that the three core elements are adjusted to include understanding government policy (philosophy), working with other jurisdictions (professional collaboration) and liberating staff to work together (structure). When all three elements are taken into consideration, they work together to increase the ability of the middle (board and superintendent) to influence both upward (government policy and direction) and downward (school level implementation). This in turn helps the middle be more effective in terms of supporting the initiatives of the Ministry and better enables the middle to support schools and teachers, which will lead to overall improvement (Hargreaves et al., 2018). Effective governance results from harnessing the power of collaboratively working with other jurisdictions to understand and interpret government policy in order to support the work of local schools (Fullan, 2015). It is this work in the middle that promotes system coherence which is at the core of effective governance (Campbell & Fullan, 2019).

Leadership from the middle synthesizes competing demands from within and external to a jurisdiction (Katz et al., 2017). In the case of my board, the potential conflict would be between the demands of government and the desire for autonomy at the school level. In this case, the board and superintendent receive direction from the Ministry of Education and interpret and localize the application of these provincial demands. This in turn supports the work of staff in the

division with a certain degree local relevance, ultimately leading to student success, which is the desired result of effective governance practices.

Supporting the expansion of trustee and superintendent efficacy in developing an effective approach to governance will be the central to focus of my OIP. I chose the leadership from the middle approach as I most authentically connect to the idea of influence over direction and discussion rather than coercion. I believe that this leads to better collaboration and by extension a deeper, mutual understanding of the work that must be completed. The leading from the middle theory therefore supports the core application of coherence in my OIP. Additionally, leading from the middle supports systemic change (Harris et al., 2019). When a board and its superintendent are engaged in the deep understanding and dissemination of government policy, they are demonstrating effective strategic governance practices (Campbell & Fullan, 2019). This allows boards and superintendents to influence upwards with the government and downwards with staff in the implementation and actualization of government policy, thus increasing the effectiveness of staff and the system overall. This in turn enhances the effectiveness of the board's governance. Additionally, middle leaders are both strategic and tactical (Sinek, 2019, as cited in Huebscher, 2019). Governance is, in some part, the connection between strategic and tactical approaches (Campbell & Fullan, 2019). Maintaining improvements is dependent on the middle taking on the mantle of leadership (Leithwood, 2013). Finally, this approach supports the most sustainable improvement as it requires collaboration between actors rather than a top down or bottom up only approach, thus engaging everyone in the improvement process (Fullan, 2015). This system approach is a core element of effective governance (Leithwood, 2013).

While there are many benefits to leadership from the middle, there are some detractors. Firstly, there must be a delineation of understanding between management and governance.

Difficulties can arise when trustees view themselves as managers rather than governors, which can be complicated by working so closely with the superintendent (Alberta Teachers' Association, 2016). This can impact the change process as it can create confusion and frustration and thereby create a loss of focus on what is most important. Additionally, collaboration requires a sincere willingness to work together. Whether it is between system levels or jurisdictions, there must be a sincere desire to learn from each other. Similarly, boards and superintendents need to be confident that those they choose to engage with are ready and willing, (Ward, 2007, as cited in Marzano & Waters, 2009). As the leadership from the middle approach relies on leveraging the professional connections of the board and other jurisdictions, not all boards necessarily want to engage in board to board collaboration. This can be particularly evident between public and Catholic boards as these relationships can sometimes be tenuous (Alberta Catholic School Trustees' Association, 2021). Finally, leadership from the middle is complicated, and often relies on leaders that have very little in the way of formal training to deal with these complexities (Sinek, 2019, as cited in Huebscher, 2019). This can have a significant impact on the change process as trustees who do not approach this type of leadership in a coherent manner will undoubtedly revert back to old, ineffective practices.

Leading From the Middle and Coherence

The leadership from the middle approach dovetails well with coherence theory in that it requires leaders to develop a deep, shared level of understanding as a result of collaboration (Campbell & Fullan, 2019). Furthermore, it identifies the board and superintendent as middle leaders with their respective roles and responsibilities defined. As shared above, these roles and responsibilities help trustees understand what is expected of them and frame the concept of governance for them. While the approach requires learning and commitment, the understanding

of trustee responsibilities should support their desire to learn, which is another core element of a governance mindset (Campbell & Fullan, 2019).

Leading from the middle supports the coherence framework approach in a significant manner (Campbell & Fullan, 2019). The authors suggest that because of the complexity of the Ministry of Education, developing a coherent relationship directly between the Ministry and schools would not be possible. The authors indicate that when leading from the middle, boards and superintendents interpret Ministerial policy, work together with other jurisdictions to identify best approaches, and then work with schools and administrators within the jurisdiction with respect to implementation. The role of leaders in the middle is the space between strategy and application (Sinek, 2020). Sinek suggests that leaders in the middle have to engage in a process of translation. This process leads to the development of both trustees and the superintendent which is linked to jurisdictional success through developing a common, shared depth of understanding of their work (Campbell & Fullan, 2019).

Framework for Leading the Change Process

My PoP focuses on the problem of how to support the expansion of trustee and superintendent efficacy in developing an effective approach to governance. Addressing this PoP requires a framework to support leading the necessary change process in order to improve the organization overall. Two frameworks which support this specific type of change are Nudge Theory and the McKinsey 7S Model. Each are examined below.

Nudge Theory

Nudge theory, according to Thaler and Sunstein (2009) relies on prodding or nudging and individual or group towards a desired change. Nudge theory hopes to elicit change through intercession (Kosters & Van der Heijden, 2015). The concept revolves around the notion that you

can influence behaviour and decision making through providing options which are more palatable and lean in the direction you wish the organization or people to change. These options can include small changes to the context in which people are working. One example would be when encouraging the board to make a specific decision to let board members know that in a neighbouring school division, the board has already chosen the option you are promoting. This knowledge exerts a small bit of pressure on the board and nudges them towards the decision you want them to make. Upon an initial examination, the theory appears to be a good fit when addressing my PoP. Trustees do not necessarily like to be instructed or even led by their employee, the superintendent and direction from the superintendent can make a complicated relationship even more tenuous (Saskatchewan School Boards Association, 2016). Nudge theory takes a less direct approach in moving trustees towards a desired approach to governing. There are however a few limitations of nudge theory that may make it difficult to fully utilize. Whitmarsh (2016) highlights three such limitations. The first being it is too simplistic in its approach. The second being that the change initiated by nudge theory usually is short term. Finally, there are ethical issues as nudge theory relies on a behind the scenes approach to instigating change. Board governance is a complex endeavor (Alberta School Boards Association, 2017). Thus, an approach which is too simplistic may not provide the depth required to engage in meaningful change. Additionally, the intent of improving governance practices with respect to this OIP is intended to be a long term, ever evolving process. Finally, from both a Catholic view and a personal view, utilizing an approach that may even suggest that there are ethical issues stemming from a behind the scenes approach is not one which is compatible with how I would like to engage in the leadership of my jurisdiction. It would also run counter to the leadership from the middle approach as collaboration requires teamwork and a

desire to work with a degree of transparency (Reeves et al., 2017). The nudge approach fails to develop a shared depth of understanding, and therefore does not support a coherent approach to governance. Given the significance of the limitations of nudge theory, another approach needs to be examined which may provide a better, more unified approach. The use of the McKinsey 7S model (Waterman et al., 1980) provides such an approach.

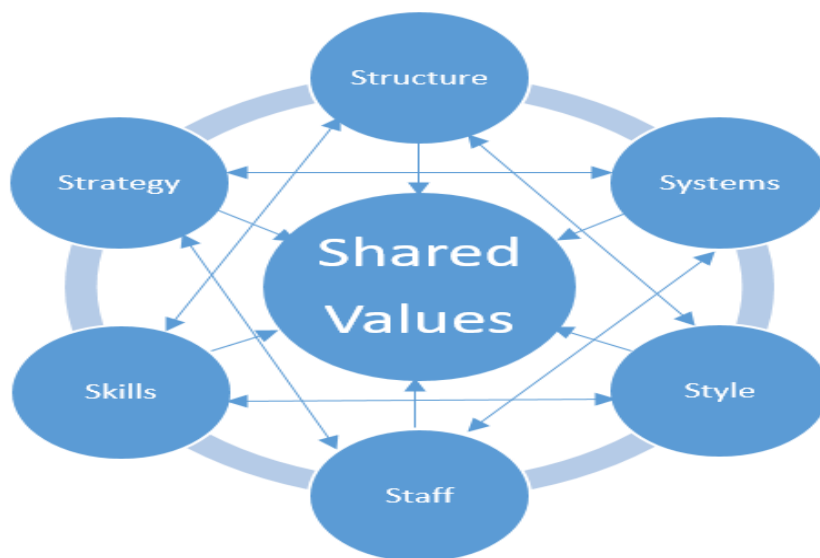
McKinsey 7S Model

The McKinsey 7S model was developed in the late 1970s by Tom Peters and Robert Waterman and has persisted ever since in being utilized by organizations (Channon & Caldart, 2015). The 7S model is a matrix of seven variables that are areas that rely on each other in order to manage change. Bryan (2008) indicates that the seven elements of the model include strategy, structure, systems, style, staff, skills, and shared values. Strategy, as Bryan shares, is a plan that focuses on the competitive advantage of the organization and attaining goals which have been set for the organization. Channon and Caldart (2015) highlight that structure focuses on how the organization is organized or structured. Systems, they continue are the procedural approaches to accomplishing the work of an organization. Bryan (2008) clarifies that style refers to the way leadership and change is approached. Bryan continues that staff and skills refers to the employees and their capabilities to employ towards achieving the goals of an organization. All of these first six elements revolve around and interplay with shared values (Channon & Caldart, 2015). Shared values, as the authors maintain, are the core beliefs and values of the organization. With respect to ECS, shared values would also pertain to the moral imperative of the jurisdiction. Figure 1 captures the interconnectedness of the seven elements of the 7S model.

Bryan (2008) explains that the design of the model displays the relationship between each element as well as their dependence on one another. It is the interplay between the elements that is critical (Waterman et al., 1980). The authors contend that if one element is changed, it has a

Figure 1

McKinsey 7S Model



Note. Adapted from “Enduring ideas: The 7-S framework,” by L. Bryan, 2008, March 1

McKinsey Quarterly. (<https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/strategy-and-corporate-finance/our-insights/enduring-ideas-the-7-s-framework#>). Copyright 2021 by McKinsey & Company.

dramatic effect on the other. Similarly, if there is a failure in one area, it has the potential to cause a failure in the whole organization. The shape of the diagram is important as it does not create a hierarchy of importance with respect to the various elements, rather, each is to be considered of equal value, given the effect that they have on each another (Waterman et al., 2008).

I believe that the McKinsey 7S model works closely with the coherence theory as describe by Campbell and Fullan (2019) with one adaptation. The 7S model relies on alignment between the elements. It is important to highlight that alignment is not the same as coherence as alignment focuses on agreement where coherence focuses on a shared depth of understanding (Campbell & Fullan, 2019). Coherence represents an understanding of the work that needs to be accomplished (Fullan & Quinn, 2016). The 7S model will support my leadership in the change process by providing a framework of important elements critical to the success of the jurisdiction that must be examined for coherence. If coherence is lacking in certain elements it is there where focus and learning will be applied. This fits well with my theoretical framework as this is the emphasis of coherence (Campbell & Fullan, 2019). Upon closer examination of the McKinsey 7S model it becomes clear that all of the elements in the 7S model can readily be identified, and all interact with the centre of the model which is similar to that of the governance core model. Juneja (2020) shares that there are five steps to utilizing the model as conceptualized by Waterman et al. (2008). These steps, after adjusting to a coherence making approach, include finding which elements are not coherent, developing an optimal design for the organization, determining the changes that need to happen, and finally implementing the plan for developing coherence. After this process is completed another assessment is done to ensure coherence between the elements. The application of this model in the context of my OIP takes a non-linear approach. I believe that this is a strong fit, as the implementation of a solution to the PoP will require an evolutionary approach rather than a linear, sequential approach. More specifically, many elements of governance may need to be addressed at one time and even if they are addressed in a specific order, they will need to be regularly checked to see if they are in coherence. The 7S model provides the flexibility to do this type of check when needed rather

than following a more structured, sequential approach to change. These checks in fact will be performed on a regular basis as once learning in one area has increased as it can create the need to develop a deeper level of learning in another area.

Although this model does have a number of strengths, there are some limitations to its application in addressing my PoP. Perhaps the most significant limitation of the 7S model is that it only focuses on the seven elements as being critical to the success of the organization. It therefore, as Juneja (2020) suggests, does not account for the external forces which may impact an organization. Additionally, it may be difficult to accurately determine coherence and therefore may limit the successful application of the model in managing change. It will be important therefore to carefully analyze each element and have probing questions for each one to help clarify the intent and purpose of each element contextually. Finally, I will have to ensure that the 7S model is coherent with my chosen approach to governance in order to fully benefit from the application of the model. This will be explored in more depth in Chapter Three.

When combined, coherence theory and the 7S model form a strong, interdependent team in the change process as there is a regular check for coherence. This supports the work and the efforts of leaders in the middle, in this case myself and my board as the 7S model identifies what is already working in terms of the jurisdiction, but also identifies areas that need deeper learning. Leadership from the middle in this context relies on a systems level examination and application of leadership. It is a strategy which relies on connections between divisions, the Ministry and the schools which are served by the board (Fullan, 2015). These connections must be regularly examined (College of Alberta School Superintendents, 2021). Through the 7S model, the framework is provided to make such an examination yet is dependent on local coherence. For

these reasons, I have chosen the McKinsey 7S model as my central framework for leading the change process.

Critical Organizational Analysis

In Chapter One, an analysis was conducted to determine why changes were required in ECS. During this portion of the analysis I will move into examining more specifically the gaps that occur between the actual state and the desired state in the jurisdiction. This work will identify what elements need to change in order to address the PoP. Nadler and Tushman (1980) propose that when an organization is functioning well it is because the various parts of the organization have a relatively good fit. Conversely, if the organization is not running well it is an indication of a poor fit between various parts of the organization. When the parts of an organization fit well they are said to be in congruence with each other. It is through this lens that ECS will be examined.

Congruence Model

The analysis of an organization begins with examining the inputs or the components that an organization has at its disposal (Nadler & Tushman, 1980). The first input the authors propose is environment. In the case of ECS, environment consists of the Ministry of Education, the unions which staff belong to, and their respective influence as well as stakeholder groups. The second input according to Nadler and Tushman is resources. With respect to the context of ECS, resources will include employees, capital and time. The third input according to Nadler and Tushman is the history of the organization. Finally, Nadler and Tushman identify the fourth input as strategy. Strategy focuses on the moral imperative of the jurisdiction, the strategic approach applied to achieving the moral imperative as well as establishing specific, measurable outputs.

The analysis of an organization therefore begins with inputs and ends in the outputs of an organization.

In the analysis of ECS, the inputs that exist play a critical role in the organization and impact the overall effectiveness of the board. Specifically, the labour unions which represent teachers and support staff have competing goals with the other major environmental element which is the Ministry of Education (Alberta Teachers' Association, 2016). This is evidenced by the constant criticism which has taken place in the media between the parties over the course of the last few years. Additionally, both of these elements have varying demands which are placed on the jurisdiction both in terms of negotiations (financial resources) and instructional (new curriculum, Ministerial Orders, etc.). At times, the demands can appear to be oppositional and requires strong leadership from the middle to develop a deep understanding of how the board and superintendent should navigate these issues in order to appropriately influence each group. The demands in turn impact the second input which is resources. The board has been put into an untenable position with respect to negotiations as the Ministry of Education has split local bargaining into two distinct groups with one being local and the other provincial. This has caused a great deal of difficulty with boards and is compounded with a new funding model which has resulted in less revenue for the jurisdiction (Alberta Education, 2020b). This further limits the ability to adapt to environmental concerns or issues as the model represents a completely new funding mechanism with many unknowns as well as many anticipated changes as the model is introduced over the next few years. The third of Nadler and Tushman's inputs is organizational history. This, as discussed in Chapter One, creates an additional layer of difficulty for the board to move towards coherent operations. More clearly, the majority of the trustees on the board are former teachers who were elected with a mandate to fix past issues from previous boards. The

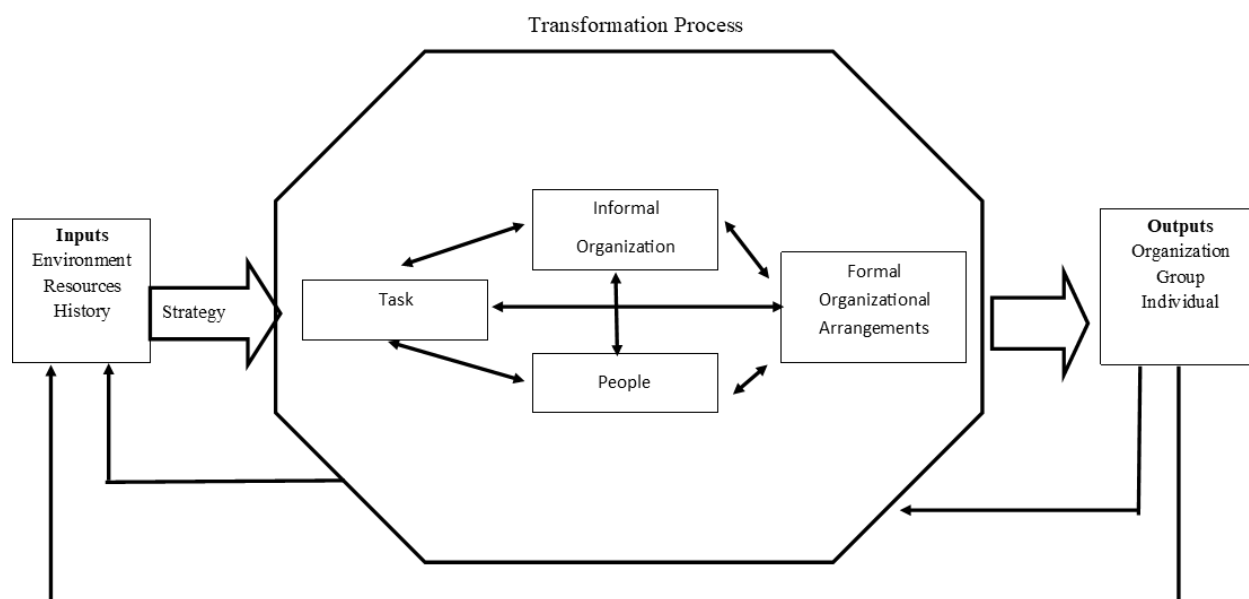
problem is that once elected, trustees learn about the scope and complexity of the issues present and begin to view them through a governance lens. This in turn causes conflict as our staff expect change to occur based on the election promises that trustees campaigned on. This external pressure also impacts the strategy of the board. Most importantly, the moral imperative of the board can be challenged at times. Additionally, there has not been a significant attempt to support the board in closely examining and identifying specifically how they define the moral imperative of the board and by extension, the jurisdiction. This has resulted in mission and vision statements, strategic priorities, and procedures that have little to do with the actual operations of the jurisdiction and little means to identify and measure specific outputs or student success. This in turn presents a major issue with respect to the transformation of the board to one focused on coherence making as there is currently no structure to generate or support effective governance practices. Without such a framework the board manages from issue to issue rather than focusing on organization and governance.

The congruence model emphasizes transformation which is reliant on organizational components and how well they work together once the inputs have been applied (Nadler & Tushman, 1980). The authors indicate four main components that need to be in congruence: task, individual, informal, and formal structures. The authors explain that task is focused on the responsibilities addressed by staff on a regular basis. Individuals include staff and related stakeholders. The formal structure refers to what an organization desires to achieve and how it approaches achieving their goals. Finally, the authors share informal structures: including ethics and standards, the manner in which the organization conducts itself, and its procedures, both in print and understood. Janse (2020) highlights that these steps include initially identifying problem areas in the organization and examining the environment in which the organization

operates. Historical and financial perspectives must be taken into consideration. Current performance is to be examined and compared to desired performance. Subsequently, the gaps or the problems between the actual and desired performance objectives and reviews are identified. Finally, there is an examination of the level of congruence between the various components of an organization, and develop a plan of action to address the areas lacking congruence. Figure 2 highlights the interplay and interconnectedness of all of the elements of the Nadler and Tushman Congruence Model.

Figure 2

Nadler and Tushman Congruence Model



Note. Adapted from *Organizational Change: An Action-Oriented Toolkit* (p. 69), by T. F.

Cawsey, G. Deszca and C. Ingols, 2016, SAGE Publications. Copyright 2016 by SAGE Publications, Inc.

What to change

The task, or work of the board is governance. Additionally, everything that a board does is governance (Campbell & Fullan, 2019). This definition yields precious little to identify what a board does. For the purposes of this OIP, governance focuses on more than just developing policies, it includes what the superintendent does, what the board does, and how the two parties work together (Campbell & Fullan, 2019). ECS has just recently updated the board policy manual in order to be in alignment with the new Education Act. Part of this alignment included defining the roles of the superintendent and the board. While there is a clear delineation of roles in policy, in practice the borders become blurred. The ECS board at times can focus more on administrative areas rather than a strategic focus. There is at times a tendency to step outside the policies currently in place in order to pass a motion to direct the senior administrative team on how a specific issue should be addressed, rather than focusing on what issues should be addressed. This problem is compounded by individual trustee desires and issues they believe should be addressed and how they should be addressed. This causes a focus on short term objectives and diminishes overall accountability to the constituents the board serves. These problems impact the overall effectiveness of the board and by extension the jurisdiction overall (Waters & Marzano, 2006). When examining outputs, one may assume that because the jurisdiction is a high performing jurisdiction, the board is appropriately engaged in its work. This may not be entirely true. Our organizational outputs such as stakeholder satisfaction rates and student provincial achievement data results are high. Individual and group outputs shed light on frustration levels as school administrators candidly indicate that they feel they have to compensate and overperform at times in order to maintain student success. As discussed earlier, the success of the jurisdiction may be due to the effectiveness of school leadership rather than

effective governance. In the Nadler and Tushman model, we take a step back and examine the fit between task and the other elements. Here we find that with respect to the task portion, there may not be as much clarity among trustees as there needs to be, as trustees may not have a clear sense of their role or understanding of effective governance practices. With respect to my PoP, there are three areas that must be changed in order to support effective governance. The first area is utilizing a formal approach to governance. The second area is understanding policy. The third area is formalizing an orientation for trustees. Addressing these areas will provide clarity of both role and effective governance.

A Formal Approach to Governance

The effectiveness of a board directly impacts the individuals working in a jurisdiction (Delagardelle, 2008). The employees of ECS include the senior administrative team, teachers and support staff. It is an important observation to note that four out of five current trustees are former teachers. This personal experience has a direct impact on the functioning and processing of the board. Many of the trustees worked in the jurisdiction prior to retirement, and all have relationships with current staff. This has at times created a teacher-centred agenda for the board, focusing again on management issues rather than governance. Additionally, when a decision is made by senior administration that may be unpopular with teachers, teachers have at times leveraged their relationships with board members to put pressure on senior administration to change their minds. This generates an individual approach to managing, rather than a unified approach to governance, which is what boards are mandated to do. This mandate is also articulated in the policies adopted by the board. Upon closer examination, this situation implicates the history of the organization and its people. The influence that staff and trustees have on one another can cause an incongruence as there is no formal approach to governing in

the jurisdiction, which leaves itself open to circumstances such as those identified above. A formal governance approach would help bring these two elements into congruence.

Understanding Policy

The board policies adopted earlier this year represent the most up to date approach to policy governance for the board. The policies also represent the most formal structure of the jurisdiction. While one may assume that because the policies were recently reviewed and updated that a sound understanding of the policies as well as the governance implications would exist. This is not the case in ECS. While there was robust discussion regarding the policies both individually and as a group, there remain gaps between development, understanding, and implementation. This is demonstrated by the board on occasion having a willingness to step outside of policy or suggest that they are guidelines rather than the structural framework they are intended to be. Policy plays an important and central role in effective governance practices (Alberta School Boards Association, 2019). This fundamental lack of understanding of how policy frames the work of governance not only leads to potential ineffectiveness, but also can potentially create legal issues regarding accountability for decisions made at the board table. When a board adheres to policies which have been adopted, risk to the board is minimized (Bourgeois, 2004). Bourgeois continues that it is human nature to want to participate in decision making, which can lead to problems with respect to risk management. It would appear then that the formal organizational element is not congruent with both the people elements and the task elements. Formalizing the policy framework and adhering to the framework will help support bringing these elements into congruence.

Trustee Orientation

The desire to participate in management decisions can often be part of the informal structure of a board. This issue is exacerbated by a lack of a formal onboarding process for new trustees (Campbell & Fullan, 2019). When a new trustee or group of trustees join the board after an election, very little has been done to this point to formally teach them about effective governance practices, how boards function, the purpose of policy and procedure and to develop a level of coherence regarding the governance of the jurisdiction overall. When testing for congruence, we find that this behaviour causes a great deal of incongruence to all other elements. Not only can the effects be witnessed between the core elements, but we can also see the inherent problems linked to this issue in the inputs and strategy components as well. Trustees must develop an understanding of how an educational system functions, how an effective board operates, and a switch from an individual perspective to a board perspective (Campbell & Fullan, 2019). This can be challenging; however, it is critical that issues such as these be addressed in order to develop and maintain sound governance practices. This challenge is addressed by my chosen leadership approach which focuses on middle leadership developing a deep understanding of issues to be able to provide influence upwards towards the Ministry and support to the school level as well (Fullan, 2015). This should help establish congruency overall, as well as support and provide feedback to improve both inputs and jurisdictional strategy.

The relationship between the issues identified above and sound governance practices are inextricably linked to one another. In examining these four core elements of the congruence model, it becomes apparent that there is currently a congruent relationship between each element, although the relationship may not be a positive one in many respects. In other words, congruence may exist in ineffectiveness. It is through the careful examination of each element

and the identification of what needs to change do we find the key solutions to addressing the PoP which is focused on answering the question of how do you support the expansion of trustee and superintendent efficacy in developing an effective approach to governance? The Nadler and Tushman model have many benefits as identified above. There are some limitations which do exist with this model that can create potential drawbacks in its application.

Implementing the approach as described by Nadler and Tushman could take a lot of time and be a relatively expensive approach for an organization to engage in (Basu, 2020). Basu identifies a second issue in that there is a lack of a formal process in terms of approaching and utilizing the eight steps of application and therefore leaves a certain level of ambiguity with respect to how this work should be done. Finally, the author suggests that even if congruence is lacking between some elements, this does not automatically create a gap or a problem on its own.

I have chosen the Nadler and Tushman congruence model as my central framework for the critical analysis of my jurisdiction. Specifically, I believe that it is closely aligned with the coherence theory as described by Campbell and Fullan (2019). This model works well with coherence theory although it should not be confused with coherence. As mentioned previously, coherence represents a deep, common understanding of the work that must be done (Fullan & Quinn, 2016). Congruence represents elements being in agreement or fit (Nadler & Tushman, 1980). It is my contention that while coherence and congruence have different meanings, the two concepts play a supporting role with one another. The congruence model permits the superintendent to evaluate the extent to which changes are necessary as well as the effect the changes will have on people. The coherence model concentrates the focus on ensuring that everyone understands, deeply, the work that must be accomplished (Campbell & Fullan, 2019). The approach to generating congruence must come from examining what is happening currently

in the organization (Nadler & Tushman, 1980). The action plan must be developed based on how and where the organization is operating currently. One of the limitations of the congruence model is that it is time consuming (Basu, 2020). While this would be a legitimate concern when engaged in the coherence making approach as described by Campbell and Fullan (2019), this represents a benefit. The coherence making approach relies on continual improvement and not a one-time attempt at solving a problem. Additionally, coherence theory can provide the necessary framework for applying a congruence approach in that it focuses on specific attributes such as trustee and superintendent mindsets that must be in congruence with each other (Campbell & Fullan, 2019). Finally, just because two elements may not fit well, it may not necessarily lead to a problem (Basu, 2020). The coherence making approach clarifies that a unified approach to governance does not require all elements to be in congruence, rather, they must be deeply understood by all board members (Campbell & Fullan, 2019). Difference does not equal a problem, rather it provides a different perspective.

When combined, coherence theory and the congruence model form a strong, interdependent team in the change process. This work supports the efforts of leaders in the middle, in this case myself and my board, as the congruence model identifies what is already working in terms of the jurisdiction and also provides tools to make improvements. Leadership from the middle in this context relies on a systems level examination and application of leadership. Through the congruence model, the framework is provided to make such an examination, yet is dependent on local coherence.

Possible Solutions to Address the Problem of Practice

This section will review three possible solutions to address the PoP. Each potential solution will be discussed, highlighting the advantages, disadvantages and required resources for

each. Finally, a choice will be made with respect to which solution will address the PoP and engage coherence most effectively. This solution will then be more fully developed in Chapter Three. The three possible solutions are discussed below beginning with option one.

Option One: Maintaining the Status Quo

As shared earlier, the superintendent leadership quality standard demands that superintendents be able to support effective governance practices (Alberta Education, 2020c). While this is a competency that must be demonstrated, it does not mean that the board will want to engage in effective governance practices. This makes addressing a PoP grounded in expanding trustee and superintendent efficacy in developing effective approaches to governance more difficult. Change can be difficult for trustees (Zlotkin, 1993). This is especially difficult if the jurisdiction is a high performing school jurisdiction. Such is the case in ECS. The jurisdiction has, for the last seven years, outperformed the provincial averages in student achievement year over year. Trustees may view these results and question the need to change what appears to be working. Additionally, as many of the trustees have served two or more terms, there is a comfort that exists with continuing on with how things have always been done. Furthermore, the provincial body which supports trustees, the ASBA, only provides professional development opportunities twice a year to trustees. The majority of these professional development opportunities are focused on topics of a general nature and not specifically on developing local effectiveness in governance. This context can set trustees on the path of becoming self-referential (Leithwood, 2010). The desire to maintain the status quo is also a personal temptation. Many superintendents view an effective board as one that does not interfere with their work, asking few questions and making few demands (Campbell & Fullan, 2019). Currently, the board that I serve does not participate in a great deal of micromanaging. There is, admittedly, a nervousness on my

part to engage in developing trustee efficacy with respect to governance as this may in fact create more work and responsibilities for myself and the team I work with. This is particularly true should the efficacy develop into negative approaches rather than positive approaches to governance. Although this work is vitally important to a board's improvement, the temptation to do nothing, can be understandably strong (Campbell & Fullan, 2019).

The case for maintaining the status quo has many strengths. Firstly, it would be the most efficient in terms of time, financial expenditures, and maintaining relationships. As mentioned previously, the ABSA does provide two professional development sessions per year to trustees provincially. These normally take place during their general meetings. There is no additional cost to the jurisdiction as trustees are already attending their general meeting as association members. Additionally, there is no required planning on the part of the superintendent. Finally, the ASBA is a trusted provider to trustees and therefore trustees normally do not disagree with participating in their organization's professional development. They do not view this as a threat to their authority. As identified in Chapter One, a final area of potential difficulty lies in the aspect that while this process should be led by the superintendent as identified in the SLQS (Alberta Education, 2020c), the board may believe that their employee should not be leading this process. By maintaining the status quo, the potential for conflict between the board and myself diminishes. There are however a number of negative aspects with maintaining the status quo.

Maintaining the status quo, while potentially the easiest option to engage in does have a number of drawbacks. The first drawback is that student achievement may be high in the jurisdiction despite the actions of trustees. Maintaining the status quo puts a tremendous amount of pressure on the senior administrative team and school teams to support student learning and achievement regardless of the decisions made by trustees. A second drawback is that maintaining

the status quo relies on outside expertise and does not address the local context of the jurisdiction or the needs of the trustees. As previously mentioned, the ASBA professional development opportunities are intentionally general in order to appeal to a broader audience. This does not provide trustees the opportunity to develop and grow in areas specific to their own personal needs or to develop the deep, shared understanding that a board must have to be effective (coherence). One such example would be focused on developing a better understanding of the G-TEC model utilized by the board (ASBA, 2019). A third drawback is that maintaining the status quo would appear to require very little resources. Upon initial review, this would appear to be a benefit, yet this is not entirely accurate. Ineffective governance practices of a board can lead to making poor financial decisions, which over a long period of time can cause resources to be deployed in ineffective ways which can impact student performance (Saskatchewan School Boards Association, 2016).

Option Two: Focus on Understanding the G-TEC Model

As mentioned in Chapter One, most boards including ECS utilize the G-TEC policy model (Alberta School Boards Association, 2019). This provides another structural element to support the work of the board. The model relies on the development of core policies which set the direction for boards to follow. It is within this direction that the separation of duties and procedure occurs and clear roles and responsibilities are intended to emerge. It is important to have an informed structure in place as the quality of the structure directly impacts the overall effectiveness of the organization (Boleman & Deal, 2008). In fact, structure plays a key part in overall effectiveness (Martin & Herrero, 2018). Finally, Sonnenfeld (2002) highlights the significance of structure and adds that there are other factors which have an additional impact on board effectiveness. Structure therefore would appear at the outset to be a perfectly valid area to

focus on in order to begin developing trustee and superintendent efficacy in utilizing effective approaches to governance. The G-TEC model was developed in Alberta for the ASBA (Alberta School Boards Association, 2019). Implementing this model provides a detailed framework for boards to operate within. When a board has a sound framework to operate from, the framework acts as a central support to effectiveness (Ontario Government, 2009). Thus, there is much in the way of support for boards to focus on the structural elements of governance. Additionally, as much of their work as a board is captured in the G-TEC model, it will be important for my board to fully understand their roles and responsibilities. Structure for a board provides for clarity of purpose (Government of Ontario, 2009). With clarity of purpose, effective governance can flourish (Saskatchewan School Boards Association, 2016). It is through the utilization of a framework that trustees are best able to address the nuances of their local context, thus allowing them to effectively address the needs of their constituents and by extension staff and students (Government of Ontario, 2009). Trustees feel that effective governance must address local needs (Galaway et al., 2013). This includes local autonomy, local culture, finances, the regulation of teachers, and working with government. By addressing these needs, trustees may feel engaged in their work as a board and therefore start to develop sense of efficacy in developing an effective approach to governance. It is impossible, however, for a board to use a model effectively if they do not understand it (Carver & Carver, 2009). Again, highlighting the importance of model and related impact on effective governance. Most trustees view this as their central work and role (Galaway et al., 2013). This notion therefore would make the implementation of a professional development approach regarding the G-TEC model somewhat easier as trustees already recognize the value and significance of the model. As the model was developed in Alberta for Alberta school boards, the ASBA provides the professional development for trustees.

While this focus may be attractive to trustees and thus make it easier to utilize in addressing the PoP, it does have a number of limitations as well. While a deep understanding of the policy model is imperative (Carver & Carver, 2009), this approach provides for a very limiting perspective of governance overall. While the governance model has been demonstrated to have an impact on board effectiveness (Ontario Government, 2009) it is not the only factor. That is to say, effective board governance is comprised of many elements that work in unison with each other. Additionally, it has already been highlighted in Chapter One that trustees do not enjoy professional development as a group, and therefore even though they may find the topic important, they may not actually want to engage in learning more about it (Brown, 2006). Even if the board does develop a better understanding of the G-TEC model, there is no guarantee that they will implement their understanding as the model only addresses governance through the lens of policy and procedure and does not fully account for all of the other elements, such as collaboration, which lead to overall effective governance practices. This results in a lack of coherence as the deep learning of trustees and myself would be focused on a very limited area of governance. There is also a lack of published material regarding the model and therefore creates a dependency on the ASBA. This represents one of the more significant implementation costs in terms of resources as ASBA consultants must be hired to provide the information. Additionally, although the model places the board in a better position with respect to making financial decisions from a procedural perspective, the framework itself does not guarantee that resources would not be wasted based on uninformed decisions. Finally, time will be required of both the board and the senior administrative team to engage in professional learning about the model and then to continue developing related policy, procedure, and planning. With all of the above

limitations discussed, the model of policy governance utilized by the board still remains an important element in effective governance, it is simply not the only one.

Option Three: Utilizing the Governance Core Approach

The policy model utilized by a board while important, is not directly linked to effective governance (Campbell & Fullan, 2019). The authors contend that a focus on the core elements of governance will lead to effective governance rather than simply relying on the structure of a policy model. The core elements as identified by Campbell and Fullan (2019) create a foundation for efficacy to begin to develop. The elements include the moral imperative of governing, the trustee governance mindset, the superintendent governance mindset, onboarding new trustees, and governing for efficacy by integrating coherence.

The moral imperative of any school board lies in the commitment to student learning and developing the necessary relationships, strategies, and values in order to ensure that all students will learn (Campbell & Fullan, 2019). This, the authors suggest, goes much further than vision statements as vision statements focus on intent and lack the actionable plan for implementation and often are created and then forgotten about. This moral purpose that has been identified is imbued into all of the decisions and actions that a board engages in. These include areas such as not allowing an achievement gap, hiring excellent teachers and providing a safe learning environment (Campbell & Fullan, 2019). The authors conclude that the moral imperative is the foundation that governance mindsets are built on.

The governance mindset is a strategic focus on systems (Campbell & Fullan, 2019). The authors highlight that governance is focused on policy and developing strategic direction, not on administration or management. The development of a governance mindset is incredibly important to a board and superintendent as it serves a very similar role to that of the training

administrators engage in to effectively run their schools. This skill development focuses on acting in a unified, cohesive manner which is directed by the moral imperative of the jurisdiction. By developing this skill, board members go beyond acting as individuals and become part of the system as a single entity (Campbell & Fullan, 2019).

Trustees do not exist as a group of individuals, but rather only exist as a group of one (Brown & Brown, 2011). As each trustee enters the boardroom as an individual, there needs to be a unifying force that supports cohesion amongst trustees. This cohesive force is the trustee governance mindset (Campbell & Fullan, 2019). The authors suggest that the trustee governance mindset lies in understanding what a governance board does and how individual trustees can support this work. Additionally, this mindset clearly delineates between governance and management. This mindset focuses on systems thinking, focusing on strategy, learning in a deep manner about their roles, and the manner in which trustees approach their role and that these four elements must be coherent in order to be successful. (Campbell & Fullan, 2019).

The success of a jurisdiction, and therefore the students it serves is not solely the responsibility of the board of trustees. Superintendents have a large part to plan in a jurisdiction's success (Leithwood, 2013). Superintendents need to view the board as a vital part of the system of education in their jurisdiction (Campbell & Fullan, 2019). The authors compound this issue by identifying that there is very little training for superintendents with respect to governance. This can result in superintendents either not engaging with their board in governance or by minimizing the impact of the board. Finally, Campbell and Fullan conclude that superintendents must take a purposeful approach to governing with their board and engaging in board governance issues. When this occurs, the superintendent is operating within a governance mindset. This requires a significant understanding of effective governance and how a superintendent can

support its establishment. One of these strategies that a superintendent must understand is the welcoming of new trustees into the board.

Trustees often run or are encouraged to run, yet most will have little formal training in what governance is really about (Brown & Brown, 2011). The authors continue that when trustees do receive training, it is either by means of receiving an association handbook, or attending a one size fits all conference, which ignores the local context in which they will be operating. The onboarding process is of critical importance to welcoming new trustees to the board (Campbell & Fullan, 2019). The authors expand that this process allows for trustees to learn of the moral imperative of the board, be introduced to the culture of the board, begin development of a trustee mindset and finally it serves to refresh current trustees. To meaningfully sustain a positive governance culture, new trustees must be brought onto the team through a purposeful, inclusive manner (Campbell & Fullan, 2019). It is through this process that trustee and superintendent efficacy begins to form.

An effective board has trustees that have a strong sense of governance efficacy (Schmidt, 2015). As trustees and superintendent work together, they begin to better understand each other and learn how to interact with each other (Schein, 2017). Boards choose whether they will be efficient or not by choosing whether they will operate in a cohesive manner or not (Campbell & Fullan, 2019). Trust is important (Tschannen-Moran, 2014), but trustees and superintendent must be able to work together towards the moral imperative of the board. It is through the development of a governance infrastructure that boards are able to achieve success and that trustees and superintendents are able to participate in a meaningful, engaged manner (Campbell & Fullan, 2019).

To implement the Governance Core Model requires developing infrastructure. Although developing an infrastructure would appear to be straightforward, one of the major limitations to this model is that there is a tremendous amount of preparation and learning necessary to have a board of trustees get to this juncture. My chosen theoretical framework provides the necessary support to engage in this development. Specifically, coherence is made of four critical elements consisting of focused purpose, collaboration, deep learning and accountability from within which provide a roadmap for moving forward and because of the interdependency of the elements, keeps evolving (Fullan & Quinn, 2015). Additionally, the success of the above-mentioned solution assumes that trustees will agree that this is the path forward for them to take. While I personally agree with the approach that Campbell and Fullan provide, its success is largely based on the assumption that trustees will engage and agree with this approach. It in fact may take quite some time for trustees to even agree to the initial stages of this approach or may want to rely on outside experts to tell them what they need to do. Time also represents one of the first resources that will be needed in order to implement this option. Time will be required to learn about the model, as well as financial resources to cover the costs of professional development. Time will also be required to engage with trustees outside of the normal board meetings, which presents a significant cost to the senior administrative team in terms of personal time. There will also be professional development activities for trustees outside of the work completed by the senior administrative team that will require financial support. From a leadership perspective, because of the focus on systemic coherence, I believe that the leadership from the middle approach supplements the governance core solution.

I have provided three potential solutions to addressing my PoP. Each has its merits and its limitations. The first solution being maintaining the status quo is perhaps the easiest in the short

run to do, although it does precious little to address the PoP. Additionally, this option creates the largest potential to waste financial resources and most importantly is not linked to improved student outcomes. The second proposed solution focuses very narrowly at the policy governance model utilized by my board and the process of educating them on it. There is an underlying assumption that as they become more intimately engaged with the model, they will become more effective in terms of governance as a result. Like the first option, the limited nature of this choice may result in wasted resources and does not directly address student success. It does provide a framework for the board which should help address potential issues, if the board follows the model. The third solution presented focuses on implementing the governance core approach advocated by Campbell and Fullan (2019). This approach, in my opinion, addressed the PoP in totality. There is an underlying focus on building board and superintendent efficacy and enhancing board effectiveness. It highlights major areas of focus which need to be developed, such as trustee and superintendent mindsets as well as developing an appropriate governance infrastructure to support the work of the board. Most importantly, this model keys in on the method and approach to growing and sustaining this new culture once established. This is of critical importance as boards have the potential to change in composition every four years in Alberta through election. After comparing and contrasting the three possible solutions shared that I would choose the final solution as my approach to solving my PoP.

Leadership Ethics and Organizational Change

The primary focus of this OIP is to support the expansion of trustee and superintendent efficacy in developing an effective approach to governance. Central to this process will be developing a foundation of trust and coherence with trustees. Trust is critical in the change process and must come from a place of authenticity (Duignan, 2014). Tschannen-Moran (2014)

expands on this idea and suggests that it is the cornerstone to the foundation upon which any relationship will be developed. Not only does trustworthiness further the success of an organization, it also is expected from stakeholders (Gillespie & Dietz, 2009). Finally, Gillespie and Dietz share that trust is a fundamental building block to the overall ethical behaviour of an organization, which would include the change process.

Engaging in change is a significant component of leadership (By et al., 2012). The authors suggest that central to the change process is ethical conduct. This is extended by their proposition that the leader's ethical standards must align with those of the organization. When engaged in the change process or leadership itself, a number of ethical issues can arise. With respect to my PoP, there are three potential issues that arrive when addressing the problem with a possible solution. The first issue is engaging in change to make my job as superintendent easier. The second issue is trying to keep the focus of the trustees on the moral imperative of the jurisdiction rather than their own personal agendas. The final issue is once the desired change has taken place and trustees have well developed sense of efficacy with respect to engaging in effective governance, will I as the superintendent want to maintain this change. Fortunately, the leadership from the middle approach provides an excellent framework to support and address any potential ethical issues which may arise. Leadership from the middle requires leaders to display qualities such as trust, integrity, ethical relationships and honesty (Abun et al., 2017). In fact, these are the fundamental building blocks for leadership from the middle. In the context of this OIP, this would apply to both the trustees and myself.

Trustees must also be taken into consideration when reviewing ethical considerations. Trustees have a fiduciary responsibility to make decisions that are in the best interests of the stakeholders that they serve which includes students, parents, staff and the larger community

(Alberta School Boards Association, 2017). Not only then do trustees have a moral obligation to perform their duties ethically, but they also have a professional one which is captured in the Alberta Education Act (Alberta Education, 2020a). The purpose of this fiduciary responsibility is to ensure that trustees are representing the stakeholders they serve, and not their own personal needs or agendas.

Change to Make my Job Easier

There exists a temptation of superintendents to minimize trustee engagement (Campbell & Fullan, 2019). This concern is highlighted with respect to the ethical implications of potentially influencing the values of an organization to align with the personal values of the leader (Griffith, 2007). This would be potentially tempting as the formal leader of the jurisdiction. As there is an overlap and potential grey areas that exist between governance and management (Leithwood, 2015), this is a common difficulty experienced by many Chief Executive Officers (Bush, 2017). As a superintendent, the easiest way to minimize trustee interference in my role is to isolate trustees as much as possible from the decision-making process (Campbell & Fullan, 2019). This creates an ethical dilemma as trustees would be making decisions without having full knowledge of all the facts. Thus, they would not actually be making an informed decision but rather ratifying a decision that I made. Collaboration, as Griffith (2007) shares is the key to minimizing ethical concerns. Collaboration is also a keystone in the governance core approach (Campbell & Fullan, 2019) and a hallmark of leadership from the middle (Hargreaves & Braun, 2010). A superintendent's governance mindset demands an ethical approach to supporting trustees (Campbell & Fullan, 2019). This then becomes a question of overall commitment to the change approach and leadership from the middle framework which will be utilized in the process of addressing the PoP. To fully engage in the governance core

approach requires total commitment from the superintendent as it will be my responsibility and largely my efforts that initiate this work. The reasons for engaging in this work to address the PoP serve as the first litmus test of ethical conduct and will act as a uniting thread for the various patchwork of issues that will need to be address along the change continuum.

Moral Imperative

Initially, when reflecting on potential issues that may arise ethically, a moral imperative may seem counterintuitive to present itself as an issue. With respect to governance, trustees may lack the ethical responsibility of focusing on the moral imperative of the school jurisdiction. Additionally, even if they recognize it, they may not believe it is necessary or want to have that as a focus of the board, choosing rather to focus on individual issues or concerns such as advocating for a former colleague or family member. Fortunately, the concept of a moral imperative for a school jurisdiction is captured in the governance core approach (Campbell & Fullan, 2019). Campbell and Fullan explain that central to the work of a board in practicing effective governance is focusing on the moral imperative not only as a reminder of why they are governing but also it serves as a litmus test for decisions to be made and whether or not the decisions are in alignment with the moral imperative. Similarly, a focus on core values can help keep leaders focused on the greater good and not their own individual pursuits (Peterson et al., 2012). Scharif and Scandura (2014) highlight the importance of leaders being trusted in the change process, with a great deal of this trust relating to ethical conduct. It is through the focus on the moral imperative of the jurisdiction that trustees and I can demonstrate trustworthiness to our staff, stakeholders and each other.

Ethics of Maintaining Change

In addressing the PoP which deals with creating trustee and superintendent efficacy in developing an effective approach to governance, once a desired change has happened there may be the realization that now trustees are more involved in the decision-making process, even if appropriate. As discussed earlier, there is a tendency for board responsibilities and superintendent responsibilities to overlap (Gill et al., 2005). While this may cause tension, it may certainly increase the potential for greater tension if the overlap is increased by design. The governance core approach indicates that this is to be expected and embraced (Campbell & Fullan, 2019). Should the focus on the moral imperative remain constant, and a leadership from the middle approach be taken to address meeting the needs of the board, then, as Campbell and Fullan suggest, a coherent approach to governing will emerge. This may prove more difficult to work with than it may appear. It is important for trustees to develop skills in order to govern (Ontario Public School Boards' Association, 2018). These very skills will allow for trustees to be much more engaged in the governance process and in turn govern more effectively. It will require developing a relationship based on trust, particularly with a sincere desire on my part for the board to engage not only in the core governance approach but also to engage in the real work of the board that comes with successful application. Many superintendents would prefer not to engage their board in this manner, keeping them out of their area of responsibility (Campbell & Fullan, 2019) as this will serve to keep their job easier. It will require reflection and an authentic approach to engaging the board in this manner to begin developing a sense of efficacy with respect to governance. Addressing this PoP will rely on both a core governance approach as developed by Campbell and Fullan (2019) and the inherent strength of the leadership from the middle approach to be successful.

Chapter Two Conclusion

In this chapter, I addressed the planning for change component of my OIP. The leadership from the middle approach as developed by Hargreaves and Braun (2013) is identified as my preferred approach to leading the change process was discussed. The McKinsey 7S model (Bryan, 2008) is then illustrated and discussed as providing the necessary structure required to address a systems approach to change. The Nadler and Tushman Congruence Model (2018) was utilized as an analytical tool to help determine what change is necessary. This resulted in developing an understanding that trustees need to develop a coherent approach to governing. Subsequently, three possible solutions were presented with a choice of utilizing the Governance Core (Campbell & Fullan, 2019) approach to governing. Finally, the ethical considerations linked to the proposed solution were discussed. These understandings will support the next steps required in addressing the need to develop effective governance practices using the governance core approach.

Chapter Three: Implementing, Evaluating and Communicating

The focus of this OIP is to address the need to change the beliefs and attitudes of trustees and superintendent with respect to how they view their jobs and their interactions between themselves and the superintendent. More specifically, the focus is on how trustees and myself as superintendent engage with each other with respect to developing efficacy towards utilizing the governance core approach. Currently, a gap exists between the board's perception of what the roles of the board and the superintendent look like versus what the roles of the board and superintendent need to be in order to develop a high functioning board focused on student success. Chapters one and two illustrated contexts, approaches to leadership through this process and possible solutions to the PoP. Chapter Three provides a plan for implementation, as well as specifying the method in which the change process will be monitored and evaluated. Finally, a plan for communicating the need for change and the change process will be shared, along with next steps and future considerations.

Change Implementation Plan

Chapter Two suggested that a review of the G-TEC model (Alberta School Boards Association, 2019) as well as the application of Campbell and Fullan's Governance Core Approach (Campbell & Fullan, 2019) would be the most appropriate path forward in order to address the PoP and thereby generate improvement in the organization. This plan therefore is about imbuing coherence throughout the governance framework of the board and developing a unified partnership between superintendent and board, guided by the moral imperative (Campbell et al., 2021).

The plan to address the PoP will require a formal, strategic approach, drawing from the strengths of the Governance Core approach (Campbell & Fullan, 2019), and the Coherence

model (Fullan & Quinn, 2016). To realize the success of the plan, the McKinsey 7S change model and the plan, do, study, act (PDSA) model will be used to support the change process. This process will be led through a leadership from the middle approach. And finally, reflection on the part of the myself and the trustees will be a key component of this process. For trustees to be successful, they need to have a sound understanding of governance (Saskatchewan School Boards Association, 2016). The intended result of this is for the superintendent and board to be effectively working together, guided by the moral imperative of the jurisdiction which is the core of effective governance (Campbell et al., 2021). One approach to developing this understanding is through the Governance Core model.

The Governance Core model is based on five elements: Governance Mindset, Coherence, Governance Culture, Governance Jobs, and Governance Tools (Campbell & Fullan, 2019). This approach the authors contend, is not a step-by-step approach to be followed. Rather it is a systemic approach that needs to be applied coherently and continually in order to increase the effectiveness of the board. As each element is developed, the system is improved over all by trustees and the superintendent effectively collaborating and being guided by the moral imperative (Campbell et al., 2021). This is the essence of the governance core which is at the centre of this model. This process is supported by the McKinsey 7S model in that when changes are made to one element, the change impacts all of the other elements. The three phases of implementation will be discussed below.

Phase 1

As articulated in Chapter Two, there exists a gap between having to develop the efficacy of the trustees and myself with respect to engaging in effective governance practices and knowing how. The three implementation phases provide a framework to develop that exact

efficacy. As stated earlier, at the heart of effective governance is the governance core and effective governance occurs when the superintendent and the board work collaboratively, guided by the moral imperative of the board (Campbell & Fullan, 2019).

Phase 1 begins by focusing attention on the moral imperative of the jurisdiction and clarifying the concept of the governance core. Specifically, a focus on student success will be clarified (moral imperative) and the importance of the relationship between the myself and the board. Additionally, during Phase 1 the governance mindset element and coherence element will be introduced to trustees.

Element #1: Governance Mindset

Mindset as an attitude (Campbell & Fullan, 2019). The first part of developing a positive attitude towards governance is for the board to understand and agree on the moral imperative of the jurisdiction. This is a responsibility which will lead us into the future (De Gruyter, 2016). Campbell and Fullan (2019) suggest that it has to focus on student learning and success. Additionally, Campbell and Fullan identify four key factors in a trustee governance mindset that are critical to becoming a highly effective board. These include: Systems Thinking, Strategic Focus, Deep Learning, and Manner. It is through purposeful action the authors conclude, that this mindset can be learned by trustees.

Systems thinking as Rutherford (2019) suggests is the understanding that individuals are systems, which are part of larger systems. Rutherford continues that it is important to understand your role within a larger system in order to be more effective. This type of thinking allows the board to apply a common approach to governing (Jacobs, 2018). Trustees must be able to see all of the elements of the school system at work and witness how they interact with each other (Campbell & Fullan, 2019). This approach allows for the board to develop a governance view of

the entire organization (Mohan, 2011). It is also critical to their success that they continue to reflect and learn from success and failures (Jacobs, 2018).

Strategic Focus is the second factor in a governance mindset. Trustees must be focused on the moral imperative of the jurisdiction, the goals and strategic direction (Campbell & Fullan, 2019). When governance is effective, these systemic elements will naturally work together (Mohan, 2011). It is critical that the superintendent and the board agree on which decisions are strategic in nature and which are managerial in nature (Brudney & Murray, 1998). This, the authors contend is where the understanding between governance and administration is established.

Deep Learning is the third factor in a governance mindset. The Ontario Public School Boards' Association (2018) shares that trustee professional development is an incredibly important component to effective governance. Trustees are often dependent on the superintendent as a primary source of knowledge (Campbell & Fullan, 2019). It is incumbent on the superintendent therefore to ensure that trustees are well-informed about what is currently taking place both in the jurisdiction and the province (Alberta School Boards Association, 2017).

Manner is the final factor in a governance mindset. Trustees must conduct themselves in a professional, respectful manner at all times (Campbell & Fullan, 2019). Trustees can struggle between balancing personal opinions and their role as a member of a board (Ontario Public School Boards' Association, 2018). It is important for the trustees to remember that their conduct sets the tone for the entire jurisdiction (Alberta School Boards Association, 2017). To address this, Campbell and Fullan (2019) indicate that developing norms and protocols can help support trustees in ensuring that they conduct themselves in an appropriate manner.

Element #2: Coherence

Campbell and Fullan (2019) share that coherence on a board exists when board members and the superintendent are able to act in a unified manner collaboratively, based on a foundation of trust. To develop coherence, board members, as Campbell and Fullan (2019) suggest need opportunities to work with both jurisdictional administration and educators. This process they highlight, is the essence of a governance mindset. The authors conclude that coherence and a governance mindset is the glue that keeps a board working together well. When combined with the leadership from the middle approach, a purposeful attempt to develop capabilities and system coherence will result in overall improvement of system performance (Fullan, 2015). It will be important therefore to have trustees engage in deep, meaningful dialogue through the school year with various educators, administrators, and senior administrative team members. Collaboration does not necessarily equate to consensus; however, collaboration requires an authentic desire to lead the board to having deep discussions and providing them with access to staff (Alberta School Boards Association, 2017). This will support the collaborative efforts of trustees (Ontario Public School Boards' Association, 2018).

During Phase 1, the foundational work to developing effective governance practices will be initiated. This process begins with a board discussion meeting (governance tool) in early August. This day-long event will be the initial introduction to the governance core framework and the above-mentioned elements and the concepts of moral imperative and governance core. There will be a minimum of four discussion meetings during the year and they will be attended by myself, senior administration and the trustees. I will be the facilitator for the meetings. As the facilitator it will be important to recognize the superintendent lens that I am working through and to make sure that I am open to collaboration, and not just directing trustees to the outcome I

would like. The leadership from the middle approach will support this through the need to develop a shared understanding of the elements trustees will be introduced to during the course of the day. After each element is introduced, breakout discussions and sharing back will take place to identify what the specific focus on student success will be (moral imperative) and to have trustees be able to explain the significance of the relationship between board and superintendent. The coherence element will also be presented and these discussions will ultimately provide the board with an overall understanding of why it is important to engage in effective governance practices. Discussion meetings are intended to provide trustees with a comprehensive overview of the topics as well as ample time to engage with the content and begin developing a deep, shared understanding of it, which is the focus of coherence. (Campbell et al., 2021).

During the latter part of the discussion meeting summaries of discussions will be collected and refined and will begin to form the trustee handbook. The handbook identifies what trustees have agreed to with respect to their role and the depth of their shared understanding (Campbell & Fullan, 2019). Some items I anticipate to include at this stage will be board meeting format and reporting, the moral imperative, and a definition of trustee mindset.

Phase 1 should last approximately four months. Subsequent to the first discussion meeting, each board meeting will have time set aside to review the core concepts discussed up to this point and to check for coherence. Specifically, elements of McKinsey's 7S model will be discussed, and through the discussion, the level of coherence will be identified. Additionally, the board will engage in another governance tool, the board self-evaluation. This will occur on a monthly basis and will focus on elements of the McKinsey 7S model that relate to the elements of the governance core being worked on. The McKinsey 7S model supports this approach, as the

elements presented in the model dovetail well with coherence and the governance core in that when one element is adjusted, all others are impacted. Additionally, with the range of elements, the model will provide the necessary check for coherence, adjustment in approach, and recheck for coherence. This check is important as change in this model can only be made and sustained if all seven elements are in a state of coherence. When an element is not coherent with the others the change made is difficult to maintain (Bryan, 2008). Table 1 identifies the McKinsey 7S elements and related governance core elements that will be surveyed throughout the year in the self-evaluation using the questions posed for each element to check for coherence.

The self-evaluation will be a survey at the end of the board meeting that has trustees and superintendent reflect on the meeting and related elements. It will include Likert Scale questions as well as an opportunity to provide anecdotal feedback. The results of the survey will be analyzed by myself and the board chair to determine the depth of shared understanding and identify areas that need to be reviewed or more learning provided on. Then a plan will be developed and executed during the professional development portion of the next board meeting. This process represents a small but important plan, do, study, act cycle that will be repeated monthly throughout the year.

Phase 2

The first phase establishes the foundational understanding of coherence, the governance core and the moral imperative of the board. Phase 2, similar to Phase 1 begins with an entire day being set aside as a board discussion day. This day would be similar in format where the focus would be on developing guiding principles, and norms and protocols for board conduct. Additionally, an initial presentation on the G-TEC model will be provided. The key learnings of this day would be captured in the board handbook. The self-evaluation process which engages

the McKinsey 7S elements and the cyclical PDSA cycles will continue through this phase as well. Key learnings for governance culture and governance jobs are identified below.

Table 1

Applying the 7S Model

7S Element	How is this applied? / Questions to be asked
Skills	Institutional and staff Do we need to generate different skills to address our needs? What are we going to do ourselves rather than rely on others?
Systems	Processes of the company What do we need to focus on to get our job done?
Structure	Staff need to know who is leading How do we clarify relationships within the organization?
Staff	People and their respective talents How do we grow and develop people and talent?
Style	Culture – the way we do things here How do create informed roles? How do we address outsiders with a different style?
Strategy	Complex – move the organization towards the future in a constantly evolving manner What are we going to do?
Shared Values	Superordinate goals What are we trying to achieve? Moral imperative, Catholic values

Note. Adapted from “Enduring ideas: The 7-S framework,” by L. Bryan, 2008, March 1

McKinsey Quarterly [Audio podcast episode]. (<https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/strategy-and-corporate-finance/our-insights/enduring-ideas-the-7-s-framework#>).

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Element #3: Governance Culture

As a group works together, how the group conducts itself and interacts with each other generates the norms of the group which eventually becomes the main elements of its culture (Schein, 2017). Campbell and Fullan (2019) suggest that boards decide whether they will be effective. This choice manifests when trustees actively follow established norms and protocols or simply disregard them when it suits their objective (Mohan, 2011). When a board is functioning coherently the culture of a board generates effective results (Campbell et al., 2021). It will be

important therefore to regularly work collaboratively with the board to discuss, develop, and imbue the norms of how they will function effectively and for the senior administrative team to continually plan for opportunities for the board to engage in governance discussions (Waters & Marzano, 2006) and practice collaborative work in order to increase their overall effectiveness (Brown, 2006).

Element #4: Governance Jobs

The official roles and responsibilities of the board are found in the Alberta Education Act and are further defined in local board policy which must be formally adopted at a board meeting (Alberta School Boards Association, 2017). Not all roles are governance related, but the nuances of each must be understood (Campbell & Fullan, 2019). Understanding roles and responsibilities leads to more effective governance practices and results (Ontario School Boards' Association, 2018).

The core work of governance, as Campbell and Fullan (2019) suggest, lies in the board developing strategic direction and policy based on the moral imperative of the board. It is then up to the board to provide indicators of accountability in meeting those priorities and to determine the key success measures have been achieved (Mohan, 2011). From the perspective of the superintendent, it will be critical to engage the board in ongoing, deep learning regarding their roles and responsibilities. This will require additional financial resources to be made available in order to engage trustees in meaningful, relevant and thought-provoking development activities.

Phase 3

Phase 3 utilizes the final element in the Governance Core Model which is Governance Tools. Campbell and Fullan (2019) share four main tools including discussion meetings, board

self-evaluation, board professional development, and the governance handbook. Phase 3 will begin approximately at the eight-month mark of implementation. At this point, the board discussion meeting will focus on a review of the board handbook and board meeting self-assessments to date. From this analysis, a plan for professional development will be developed that addresses areas that are not in coherence. It is my intent to engage in regular quarterly board discussion meetings in order to regularly review process and ensure coherence between myself and trustees.

Element #5: Governance Tools

It is in this final element where we are able to see how the other four elements and developed and executed, thus provides a structure to the governance core approach. Time will be required to develop each of the items identified above as well as a commitment from the senior administrative team to generate these documents, revise and work coherently with them. Table 2 summarizes the three phases and provides a timeline, elements addressed and a brief explanation of major activities. Table 3 captures the implementation in our local context with respect to goals, actions, stakeholder roles, and required resources.

Managing Transition

In Chapter Two, I conducted an organizational analysis which revealed that stakeholders in the jurisdiction had a tremendous influence on the board in an unstructured manner. This is part of the reason to implement the governance core approach created by Campbell and Fullan (2019). This shift will cause many stakeholders to react in both positive and potentially negative ways. In this section of the OIP, I will explain how I will seek to understand stakeholder reactions and adjust plans when necessary.

Table 2*Summary of Three Phases of Implementation*

Phase	Time line	Element	Explanation
1	4 Months	Governance Mindset Coherence	Introductory phase highlighting the governance core, importance of mindset of trustees and superintendent and the need for a shared, deep understanding of the work of the board
2	4 Months	Governance Culture Governance Jobs	G-TEC model is reviewed and contextualized, norms and protocols established, roles and responsibilities of board and superintendent clarified
3	Reviewed Quarterly	Governance Tools	Tools including discussion meetings, board self-evaluation, governance handbook and professional development planning are reviewed

Table 3*Implementation in the Local Context*

Goals	Actions	Stakeholder Roles	Resources Required
Handbook	Develop handbook	Senior Admin team develop Trustees approve	Time Reproduction Cost Professional learning
Board Report	Develop new model	Senior Admin team develop Trustees approve	Time for development Professional learning Implementation time
Meeting Format	Generate a new format for board meetings	Senior Admin team collaborates with trustees to generate new meeting framework	Time to research formats Time for Implementation Professional learning
Governance Jobs	Define and support trustee understanding	Senior Admin leads discussion	Time Facility rental Professional learning
Norms and Protocols	Lead board through development	Superintendent leads discussion	Time Professional learning

Understanding Stakeholder Reactions

As part of my organizational analysis in Chapter Two, the impacts of the union and teachers on the board were discussed. The impacts of the teaching staff on the direction, approach and focus of a jurisdiction cannot be underestimated (Dudar et al., 2017). The

anticipated result of implementing the governance core approach as suggested by Campbell and Fullan (2019) will lead the board to a state of operational coherence where the moral imperative of the jurisdiction is the primary focus and not localized, individual interests. It is expected that teachers who have been used to a great deal of influence may not initially appreciate this shift in approach by the board. It will be imperative to provide support to the board during this transition to hold fast and stay the course. This is perhaps the one area where stakeholders will have to make an adjustment as the board begins to govern more effectively.

Effective governance practices will require myself as superintendent and the balance of the senior administrative team to generate detailed reports, provide adequate information for all relevant topics, and adhere to a meeting structure that requires a great deal of preparation. It will be important therefore to address these issues, prior to engaging in the process. Meeting with the senior administrative team and developing a shared understanding of why this change is necessary as well as a shared commitment to the process will help support the change process. It will also require meeting regularly with the senior administrative team to review and adjust reporting to ensure that trustees are being equipped with the most current knowledge on a given topic. These meetings will also provide an opportunity to understand issues that the team may have.

Determining Supports and Resources

To ensure the successful implementation of this plan, the single greatest resource required will be time. Time will be required to meet with the senior administrative team. A great deal of time will be devoted to report generation. Additionally, time will be required for trustee discussion meetings, committee meetings, and professional development. Professional development opportunities may involve utilizing the services of a consultant, which will generate

a financial cost to the implementation process. Additionally, copies of resources such as the book, *The Governance Core*, as well as other governance related texts may need to be purchased to supplement trustee learning. Finally, as the superintendent I will have to engage in a number of professional learning opportunities on a regular basis in order to support the board's continued growth. The College of Alberta School Superintendents provide several professional learning opportunities throughout each year specifically linked to the SLQS (CASS Professional Learning, 2021). Additionally, I will have to research other professional learning opportunities and also commit time specifically to devote to professional learning. This will require a financial component; however, I do have a professional development allowance which should sustain this learning.

Potential Implementation Issues

Within this OIP exist at least four potential implementation issues. The first issue rests in the buy-in of the board and to an extent the senior leadership team with respect to the new approach to governing. Lewis (2011) highlights the critical nature of what can happen when change does not occur suggesting that amazing accomplishments can be recognized, though the consequences of not changing can be just as spectacular. The approach I plan to take with the board and the senior administrative team is one that first highlights successes and then tries to develop a sense of continued growth. Developing and articulating the moral imperative and the need for coherence support this process as will the board self-evaluations. It may also require a senior administrative self-evaluation as well to ensure that we are on track.

Time was referenced earlier as the main resource required to implement this OIP. Time may result in being an issue for implementation as well. As the current pandemic has taught us time is not under our direct control. It will be important to incorporate learning opportunities for

the board within in other typically scheduled meetings in order to minimize extra time requirements as we will already have quarter discussion meetings scheduled. Additionally, materials will be needed to be prepared in advance, they must be concise, and easily digestible. Finally, the Alberta School Boards Association (2019) has developed many online resources along with other board organizations that will need to be utilized in order to maximize effectiveness, flexibility, and convenience and minimize the time commitment to meetings.

The third potential issue is board elections. While the board handbook crystallizes things such as the culture, governance style and means of operation (Campbell & Fullan, 2019), with each election brings the potential for a change in trustees, potentially in their entirety. It will be incredibly important therefore to have a thorough, well-developed board handbook in order to guide the orientation of new trustees both in process and conduct. The handbook provides a reference for board and the superintendent to draw from and potentially redirect to when necessary (Campbell & Fullan, 2019). In order to develop an effective handbook, the senior administrative team will first create a rough draft of main ideas and areas needing discussion. The draft would be presented to the board during the handbook development portion of the board meeting where they can collaborate and fill in the most important information. I envision this process being completed at every board meeting. This draft would then be refined by the senior administrative team and provided to the board for feedback. This cycle will continue until the board is satisfied with the working draft of their handbook. It is important not to rush this process as a quality handbook representing the core values of the board must be developed.

The final issue is the potential backlash from stakeholders such as staff and community. Stakeholders in ECS have become accustomed to having direct access to the board and thereby influence on the operations of the jurisdiction. Many may not view a more effective board

focused on student success an adequate trade for addressing personal issues or agendas. It will be necessary therefore to build commitment on the part of the board to the moral imperative of the jurisdiction in order to be able to challenge the frustration that some stakeholders may have.

Coherence will support this commitment as well as grounding the board in the governance core approach. Trustees will develop the ability to reflect what is being demanded from them against the moral imperative and determine if this falls within the scope of their work. This should help mitigate issues with stakeholder frustration.

Challenges and Limitations

Chapters one and two frame the PoP and analyze change in ECS. This chapter focuses on implementation and moving forward. It has been highlighted that the intention of this plan is to develop the necessary foundation for the board to build upon. That is, once the initial implementation is completed, the process of improvement does not end. While Campbell and Fullan (2019) have provided a comprehensive framework to engage with in this work, the board may tire of the work. This model while focused on improvement and a noble moral imperative does require a lot of learning and work. The process therefore may be limited by the board's desire to continually improve and potentially revert to past practice (Brown, 2006). As discussed previously four out of five trustees are former teachers. All would have preconceived notions about trusteeship (Saskatchewan School Boards Association, 2016), and none of the trustees have expressed concern with how the board operates or jurisdictional success. In fact, our trustees are incredibly proud of how well our students perform on provincial assessments. While worthy of celebration, this mere fact may be a huge barrier to implementation if the board does not recognize the need for change. Additionally, given the importance and the complexity of

what appears to be a simple change, the board may not wish to engage in a process of continual improvement. They could potentially view this process as inhibiting their ability to govern.

Change Process Monitoring and Evaluation

Continual improvement guided by the moral imperative is at the core of what a school board and superintendent should be concentrating on as their work (Campbell & Fullan, 2019). As this process unfolds it is important that the change that the board undergoes be monitored and periodically assessed to determine if the change is appropriate and increasing the effectiveness of the board. Markiewicz and Patrick (2015) share that it is vital that the change process be monitored. The authors continue that when combined with evaluation, a complete picture can be viewed with respect to how well a process is working. Along with monitoring change, an introspective analysis into how the system is changing via the data gathered is critical to change being successful (Patton, 2011). By reviewing the impacts of the change within the system it helps understand and validate the evaluation of the impacts outside of the internal system. The process of monitoring and evaluation therefore requires an approach that is responsive to the needs of the board and the change process itself.

Plan-Do-Study-Act

The plan-do-study-act (PDSA) process is designed to engage organizations in a process of continual improvement based on the four key elements: plan, do, study and act (Deming, 2000). Although originally a model for the improvement of businesses, the model is useful in any organization as a change management model (Donnelly & Kirk, 2015). The authors continue that its effectiveness stems from being a model for learning which connects well to the governance core approach being implemented as the solution to my PoP. Specifically, deep learning as Campbell and Fullan (2019) illustrate is a key feature of implementation of this

approach as trustees and superintendent must be continuously engaged in the process of learning more about governance and related aspects. Hord and Rousin (2013) add that learning is key to the change process as it allows participants to shed old practices and engage in new, innovative behaviours. The four steps in the PDSA cycle provide the opportunity to develop learning and grow forward from it. Engaging in the PDSA process includes planning (what are we hoping to accomplish), do (implementation), study (analyzing our results) and act (building on success and potentially engage in another PDSA cycle) (Donnelly & Kirk, 2015).

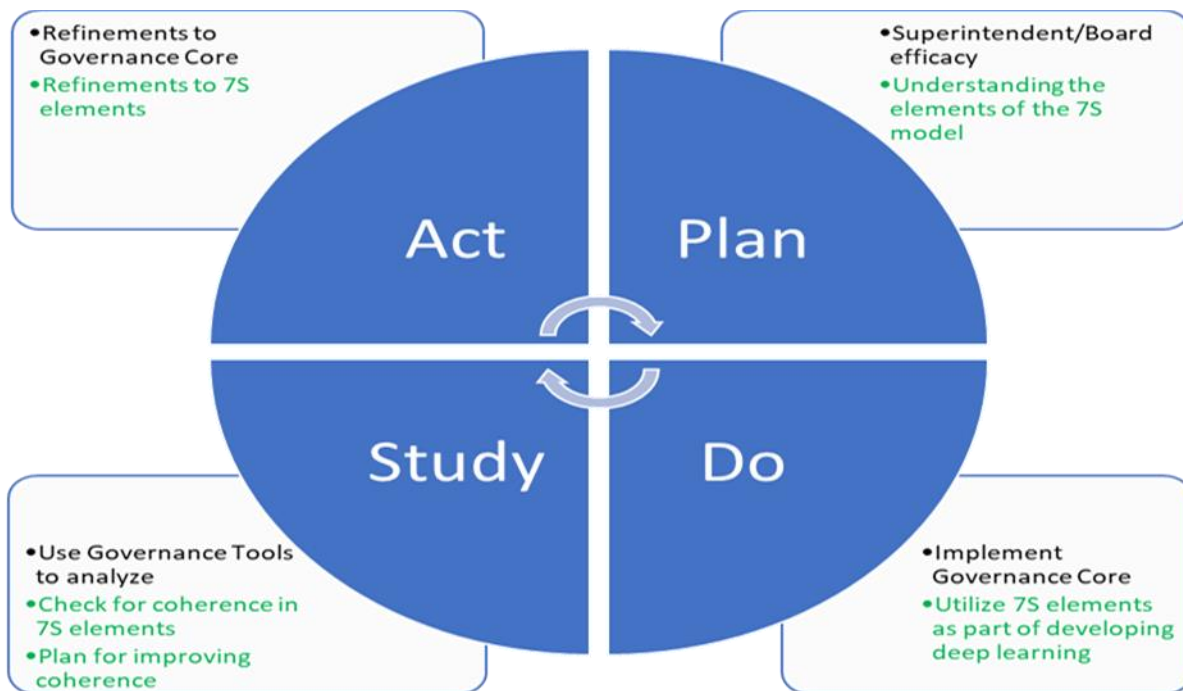
With respect to this OIP, the PDSA model will be utilized in the implementation of the proposed solution, which should initially encompass a full year. Figure 3 captures the relationship between the PDSA model, the Governance Core approach and the McKinsey 7S model for leading change and what is occurring at each stage of the process.

PDSA Model Alignment with Leadership From the Middle

Moving the change process forward requires leadership. As mentioned earlier, the expansion of trustee and superintendent efficacy in developing an effective approach to governance will be the central to focus of my OIP in addressing my PoP. The leading from the middle theory supports the core application of my OIP. As Harris et al. (2019) highlight, leading from the middle supports systemic change as the approach synthesizes direction from the Ministry and contextualizes it for schools and staff. Campbell and Fullan (2019) add that when a board and its superintendent collaborate they are demonstrating effective strategic governance over the system which is a cornerstone to the application of this approach in this context. Additionally, leading from the middle encourages all members of the division to engage in purposeful change as they can see the influence that they have as a result of their involvement (Fullan, 2015).

Figure 3

Relationship Between PDSA model, Governance Core and McKinsey 7S Model



Note. Adapted from “Use the PDSA Model for Effective Change Management,” by P. Donnelly and P. Kirk, 2015, *Education for Primary Care*, 26(4), p. 279 (<https://doi/abs/10.1080/14739879.2015.11494356>). Copyright 2015 by Peter Donnelly and Paul Kirk. The information for the Governance Core is from *The Governance Core: School Boards, Superintendents, and Schools Working Together* (pp. 97-107), by D. W. Campbell and M. Fullan, 2019, Corwin. Copyright 2019 by Corwin. The information for the McKinsey 7S model is from “Management Study Guide – Course for Students, Professionals and Faculty Members,” by Prachi Juneja, 2020, Management Study Guide (<https://www.managementstudyguide.com/mckinsey-7s-change-model.htm>). Copyright 2020 by Management Study Guide.

The PDSA model aligns well with leadership from the middle in that each model utilizes collaboration and analysis as key features. Both models require reflection on what has taken

place and to strategically develop a plan to move forward. The focus on systems supports in the PDSA model bolsters the leadership from the middle approach in supporting jurisdictional efforts system wide, as the intent of leadership from the middle is system coherence (Fullan, 2015). The alignment between the two models is both clear and mutually supportive.

PDSA Application

As highlighted earlier, there are several areas of focus that exist in the PDSA process (Donnelly & Kirk, 2015). The three specific areas of focus include aim, how do we know we have improved, and continuous improvement cycle (Langley et al., 2009). It is critical that the PDSA approach be well developed and not treated as a simplistic approach (Connelly, 2021). Each element is examined in detail below and will demonstrate the complexity of the model.

Plan

Understanding what you want to accomplish which is your aim, is central to the change process and requires planning. With respect to this OIP, the PoP is the lack of trustee and superintendent efficacy in developing an effective approach to governance. The purpose of this OIP is to engage my board as the superintendent in key governance core activities which will yield the essential behaviours leading to effective governance practices. During the planning process in Phase 1, this is where both the moral imperative and the governance mindsets of the board are discussed and developed alongside coherence. These are the critical building blocks to effective governance practices with the moral imperative being the main focus of governance overall and governance mindsets being completely focused on systems with coherence being the glue that binds the process together (Campbell & Fullan, 2019). This is also where strategy, structures, and systems in the McKinsey 7S model would be analyzed and understood (Juneja, 2020), as these elements play a foundational part as well to the overall success of

implementation. As shared earlier, strategy is a plan that focuses on the competitive advantage of the organization and attaining goals which have been set for the organization which is constantly evolving (Bryan, 2008). Structure focuses on how the organization is organized or structured and is permeated with the question “how do we clarify relationships within the organization” (Bryan, 2008). Systems are the procedural approaches to accomplishing the work of an organization (Channon & Caldart, 2015). Systemic issues that need to be examined include “what do we need to focus on to get our job done?” (Bryan, 2008). In Phase 2, governance culture and governance jobs would be analyzed and understood with respect to what we hope to achieve. In this stage coherence building and governance culture are added to the approach. Culture is the sum total of what a group learns embodied as a set of beliefs (Schein, 2017). Governance culture as Campbell and Fullan (2019) posit is the result of the choices that board members make with respect to beliefs about governance and the manner in which a board should operate. Similarly, coherence is based on the board’s belief in collaboration and trust (Campbell & Fullan, 2019). The importance of collaboration on a board cannot be underestimated. Collaboration and trust on a board is of critical importance, not only between board members, but with the CEO as well (Westphal, 1999). The author continues that a lack of collaboration and trust can lead to a board interfering with the work of the CEO. This he concludes can compromise board effectiveness.

Board effectiveness can also be identified in the elements of style, staff and strategy with respect to the McKinsey 7S model. As shared earlier, style refers to the manner in which leadership and change is approached. Critical questions with style are “how do we create informed roles and how do we incorporate approaches from those outside our division?” (Bryan, 2008). Staff and skills refer to the way employees and their abilities are employed towards achieving goals which have been planned for (Bryan, 2008). The author continues that when

checking for coherence with staff we must ask ourselves “how do we grow and develop people and talent?” while skills he contends begs the question “what are we going to do ourselves rather than rely on others?” This understanding provides a natural fit in terms of leading the change process and related stages of change.

Do

Unlike a more traditional implementation of an approach, the governance core builds upon itself as it moves forward (Campbell & Fullan, 2019). With the implementation of each of the three phases the process will be very similar. Each will begin with a comprehensive board discussion meeting followed up by specific professional development taking place during the regular board meetings.

Study

Understanding if we have improved as a result of the change initiated will require several methods of evaluation. One method will be to have the board engage in monthly self-evaluations. With questions based on the core elements of the governance core approach (Campbell & Fullan, 2019) and the critical questions cited from Bryan (2008) trustees and I will be able to determine if we are on the correct pathway or if adjustments are necessary. During the analysis, we will examine the level of coherence among trustees in terms of their perspectives on the various elements. Additionally, random comments will be identified as outliers. Finally, the monthly results will be summarized and graphed in order to see whether there is a positive or negative trend developing. As a self-evaluation process by board members is one of the most authentic and purposeful methods of determining effectiveness, Ozga and Grek (2012) propose that a well-developed self-evaluation can lead to a more powerful collaborative and persuasive engagement of participants. Additionally, provincial results from the accountability pillar report will

demonstrate year over year if the board's approach to governance is leading to increased student performance and therefore governance effectiveness. The Alberta Accountability Pillar provides school boards with a varied array of performance statistics focusing on more than provincial assessments to enable a more systemic view of jurisdictional performance (Alberta Education, 2021). Finally, as part of the Alberta Education Assurance Model, regular stakeholder engagement activities will provide several opportunities throughout the school year to gather feedback on the success of the board and the students they serve (Warren, 2021).

The feedback garnered from the various sources mentioned above will serve to support the checking for coherence portion of the McKinsey 7S model. It is vital to ensure coherence between each element and with the shared values of the organization because lack of coherence can cause a ripple effect in the organization (Walterson et al., 1980). Each of the elements, structure, systems, style, staff, skills, and strategy revolve around shared values. None of the elements are independently more important than another (Waterman et al., 1990). By examining the critical questions posed by Bryan (2008), a specific set of elements are to be examined and checked for their alignment. As cited earlier, the McKinsey 7S model focuses on coherence, not simply structures (Bryan, 2008). In this OIP, the shared values would be the moral imperative of student success and the governance core. As identified in Chapter Two, Juneja (2020) highlighted five steps to utilizing the model as conceptualized by Waterman et al. (1990). This includes identifying elements that are not coherent, comparing to the optimal design for the organization, determining the changes that need to happen, and implementing the plan for coherence. After this process is completed, another assessment is done to ensure alignment of the elements which connects well with the final stage of the PDSA model which is act.

Act

Governance effectiveness is developed as a continuous process, it is not a one-time application (Campbell & Fullan, 2019). By utilizing the PDSA model, I will be able to determine if the application of the governance core approach by Campbell and Fullan was effective.

Through analyzing board self-evaluation, provincial results and stakeholder survey results, we will be able to determine the success rates of our students and adjust implementation accordingly in order to ensure that the work of the board is as effective as possible and having a positive impact on student success. The PDSA model, as Donnelly and Kirk (2015) suggest is intended to be implemented repeatedly in order to create a cycle of continuous improvement. It would be the intent therefore to continue to refine the work of the board after the first year of implementation is complete in order to maximize coherence (Fullan & Quinn, 2016) and to ensure that all elements of the organization are coherent (Juneja, 2020). Additionally, the McKinsey 7S model provides a diagnostic layer to the process by identifying which elements are not coherent, thus providing direction with respect to where additional learning is needed (Channon & Caldart, 2015). Campbell and Fullan (2019) argue that the governance core approach is an approach of continuous improvement and therefore requires refinement after the initial implementation process is complete. When combined with the McKinsey 7S model a powerful tool is created which is flexible, diagnostic and easily utilized to coordinate the change process and keep it moving forward. As each of the three phases are completed, a more comprehensive PDSA will need to occur in order to check for coherence not only with the respective 7S elements but also with the related strategies from the governance core approach. As demonstrated earlier, utilizing the critical questions posed by Bryan (2008), the connections to the Governance Core Approach become evident and support the coordinating effect of the McKinsey 7S model.

Refinement of Implementation Plan

As discussed earlier, a number of tools will be implemented in order to monitor and evaluate the success of implementation of my OIP in addressing the PoP. Trustees will be asked to participate in a monthly board self-evaluation. The results of this evaluation will provide much in the way of evidence as to whether the board is successfully moving through the implementation of the governance core approach (Campbell & Fullan, 2019). Additionally, upon review of information gathered from the Annual Education Results Reports (AERR), more data will provide evidence of student success which is the moral imperative of the board and ultimately the defines the success of the board. Additionally, the AERR uses 16 measures, including student achievement on provincial assessments, student, parent and teacher surveys, and high school completion and dropout rates (Alberta Education, 2020b). As all of these measures are directly related to student success they become important indicators of how successfully and effectively the board is governing. The results of this analysis conducted by the senior administrative team and the board will determine whether timelines need to be adjusted, a return to initial elements such as the moral imperative and mindsets is necessary, or if new goals or strategies need to be developed. While the initial implementation is expected to be completed within one calendar year it is understood that trustees may not engage at the same speed and level that has been anticipated. Additionally, stakeholder feedback from the AERR as well as other stakeholder engagement initiatives may indicate that stakeholders may not be in favour of the new or different approaches to governing that the board is attempting to change to. This may require an enhanced communication approach to sharing the importance of the change. It will also require a review of the process to ensure that the work of the board has not deviated from the initial intent.

Plan to Communicate the Need for Change and the Change Process

The need for change as stated in Chapter Two, may be controversial as ECS is considered to be a high performing school jurisdiction. While there is not a current crisis, without developing and embedding effective governance practices, the success of the jurisdiction is tenuous at best. Additionally, the jurisdiction could take a negative direction based on the results of an election (Saskatchewan School Boards Association, 2016) or change in school leadership. It is imperative therefore that communicating the need for change be clear, concise, effective, and take into consideration both the perceptions of leadership and the stakeholders as a whole (Phillips et al., 2003). This focus will hopefully support the implementation process as well as minimize challenges to the process or even the need to engage in change.

Stakeholders perceptions of board improvement initiatives are anticipated to be overall widely accepted. I believe that it is safe to assume that the general consensus of all stakeholders would be that an effective board utilizing effective governance practices would be desirable. It has been highlighted earlier that some stakeholder groups may not perceive the desired changes as being beneficial to their personal needs. These particular stakeholders have engaged in practices which would run counter to effective governance practices such as influence through their relationships. It will be important to utilize a number of communication strategies in order for these stakeholders to fully understand what change will happen as well as develop a sense of trust that the changes will benefit students and the jurisdiction, and therefore provide benefit to their own personal needs as well.

It is important to understand the differences between how initiators of change and stakeholders view change implementation (Lewis, 2011). Initiators of change are viewing the need for change through a specific lens. In my case, the lens of the superintendent and a mid-

level leader. From my vantage point, the need to move the board towards effective governance practices is clear from both a personal perspective and that which is demanded by the SLQS (Alberta Education, 2020c). Trustees and staff may not share the same view (Ontario Public School Boards' Association, 2018), nor recognize the same need as the jurisdiction is a relatively high performing jurisdiction already. Lewis (2011) continues that there are five dimensions of communications strategy that address the focus of both the implementer and the stakeholder. Each are identified and discussed below.

1. Disseminating Information/Soliciting Input: This strategy is actioned by implementers to rationalize why change is needed. It is very much a participatory approach and fits well with both Campbell and Fullan's (2019) Governance Core and the Leadership from the Middle approach (Hargreaves & Braun, 2010) because both utilize a collaborative approach to move change forward. Stakeholders have the opportunity at this point to ask questions to increase understanding, provide their own suggestions and generate a new understanding of the change proposed. This is critical as regular communication results in improved support for change (Shah et al., 2017).
2. One-sided or Two-sided Message: This strategy provides the implementer the opportunity to either provide their point of view or a blended point of view. This strategy is all about promoting the change desired and its related benefits. The stakeholders in this strategy may choose to point out deficiencies and generate arguments opposed to the need for changes. This opposition is productive as it provides the implementer with opportunities to refine or improve the change (Rosengren, 2006).
3. Gain or Loss Frame: When an implementer uses this strategy, the approach is to highlight the gains a stakeholder will receive should they support the change or the losses

that they would encounter should they choose not to support the change. From the stakeholder perspective, they would choose to highlight the potential losses and minimize potential gains.

4. Blanket / Targeted Messages: In this strategy the implementer must decide if the messages will be tailored to specific individuals or take a general message approach reaching a wider audience. This approach can also be varied depending on the potential audience. Stakeholders may check for consistency between the messages sent to various groups or individuals.
5. Discrepancy / Efficacy: Using this strategy, implementers determine whether to focus on messaging promoting the urgent need for change or the notion that the change can be realized and goals accomplished. Stakeholders may challenge either approach and create alternate needs or beliefs regarding the likelihood of success.

Based on the OIP outlined to this point, the strategies highlighted above were used to generate a plan for communicating change. Strategies may be utilized at different levels and rates depending on the type of stakeholder being engaged or the stage of the change process that the board would be engaged in. It is important to be strategic in their use so that meaning can be generated or exchanged between implementor and stakeholder (Servaes, 1999).

The value that this approach brings is to provide multiple perspectives in order to ensure communication is meeting the needs of both the implementer and the stakeholder. I believe that from a board perspective, many of the strategies align with the various stages or emotions that they will experience as we engage in the change process. Whether it is wanting to learn more, which is an integral part of deep learning (Campbell & Fullan, 2019), engaging in refutation or focusing on both gains and losses, this model supports the overall implementation process. I

believe that it will provide trustees, senior administration, and staff with an engaging approach to learning more about the implementation and move towards the governance core approach.

Finally, the leadership approach to change utilized in this OIP is the leadership from the middle approach. As discussed earlier, leadership from the middle is comprised of three main concepts which include philosophy, structure and culture (Hargreaves et al., 2018). A culture of embedded professional collaboration focuses on candid conversations built on a foundation of trust amongst your professional peers. These discussions can lead to agreement or disagreement which are both productive outcomes as it provides an opportunity to develop a deeper understanding of the other person's perspective (Rosengren, 2006). Through authentic, purposeful communication, trust will be built amongst stakeholders which in turn supports the leadership from the middle approach. This leadership approach combined with Lewis' approach to communication are congruent with the concept of system coherence discussed in Chapter One. The strategic component of communications is critical when choosing which approach to utilize (Hallahan et al., 2007). The importance of these elements being in congruence and mutually supportive will be critical to the implementation process. Table 4 captures the five dimensions of communication as well as the focus areas of both implementer and stakeholder.

Plan for Communication

Implementing the Governance Core approach will not follow a linear path (Campbell & Fullan, 2019). Accordingly, as this approach is phased in, the communication plan will need to be in alignment with this evolution as well. I envision four major phases in this process which includes a preparing for change phase, and the balance of the process aligning with short-term, medium-term and long-term goals. Much of the work in terms of developing messaging and creating social media posts, newsletters, etc., will be completed by myself and our director of

communications with support from the balance of the senior administrative team and the board when appropriate. Key communication points will occur following board discussion meetings

Table 4

Lewis' Five Dimensions of Communications Strategy

Element	Implementer Foci	Stakeholder Foci
Disseminating Information/soliciting Input	Official view of plan/purpose Answering questions Correcting misinformation Listening to rumors Soliciting insights Inviting active participation	Alternative views of change plan/purpose Asking questions Seeking outside expertise Providing additional expertise and insight Knowledge production
One-sided or Two-sided Message	Positive selling Acknowledging and refuting others' arguments Forewarning or some negatives to provide realistic preview for stakeholders	Raising new arguments Engaging over refutation provided by implementers Inoculating fellow stakeholders to implementer arguments
Gain or Loss Frame	Focus on how cooperation with change provides advantage or how lack of cooperation will run risk of loss Gains/losses will be in terms of organization well-being; central mission of organization, individual stakeholders' gains or losses	Identifying new gains or losses not noted by the implementers Refutation of some predictions of gain/losses as unlikely or more likely
Blanket/Targeted Messages	Blanket message or marketing to specific stakeholders Determining high-value interests and information needs of key stakeholders	Tailoring messages for each stakeholder group or using blanket strategy Sharing targeted messages with other stakeholders for comparison or consistency
Discrepancy/Efficacy	Communicating need and/or urgency for change Communicating "we can do it" message to stakeholders	Supporting, refuting and/or questioning need, urgency, and efficacy messages Advocating alternative need messages

Note. Adapted from *Organizational change: Creating change through strategic communication*

(pp. 147-148), by L. Lewis, 2011, John Wiley & Sons. Copyright 2011 by Laurie K. Lewis.

and after each board meeting. This will serve to affirm success on the part of the board and engage stakeholders as well. By keeping everyone informed, stakeholders will feel that they are included in this change in a more direct and influential manner, which should support their engagement as well.

Preparing for Change Phase

This phase will mark the beginning of building support and understanding for addressing the PoP through the OIP. Critical to success in this phase is garnering support from senior administration and the board. A preliminary discussion will have to take place with the senior administrative team. It is expected that attendance will include the Executive Assistant to the Superintendent, Director of Communications, Deputy Superintendent, Associate Superintendent, and Secretary Treasurer. Held in a retreat format, the meeting will convey the need to develop coherence among the board and the senior administrative team. The strategy implemented at this point would most likely be the discrepancy/efficacy approach. Again, the purpose here is to share the urgent need for change with the senior administrative team and develop commitment from them to it. The development of efficacy in both myself as the superintendent and the board with respect to the ability to govern more effectively is central to the PoP and this OIP. It is therefore critical that strategies for communication include this cornerstone approach. It may also be beneficial to highlight potential gains or losses should the change be implemented or not, so that stakeholders (board, senior administration and staff) can legitimately understand the need and consequences of either approach.

Short-term Goal Phase

During this phase the foundational work of implementing the governance core approach begins. Focusing on developing a moral imperative, a handbook and generating a better understanding of procedures is required. Communication strategies implemented at this phase include Disseminating Information / Soliciting Input and Sidedness. During this phase information must be shared regarding the plan for and the purpose of change. It also provides an opportunity to receive input from stakeholders and provide their own insights. This will be

accomplished through surveys, townhalls and board discussion meetings. The One-sided or Two-sided Message approach provides the opportunity to sell the change needed and to begin sharing the consequences of not moving forward with change. This strategy will be implemented using social media, news releases, superintendent's blog, and newsletters. At this point, these tactics are easily generated, quickly disseminated, and also can be adjusted immediately. It is also easier to custom tailor messaging to specific groups without a great time commitment.

Medium-term Goal Phase

At this phase, coherence, an understanding of the role of the board, norms and protocols, and a self-evaluation instrument are being deployed. Additionally, checking for coherence among the seven elements of the 7S model is also being conducted. Communications strategies implemented at this phase will include Discrepancy / Efficacy and Blanket /Targeted Messaged. Because the PoP focuses on the need to develop a sense of efficacy on the part of the board and the superintendent it is critical at this juncture to ensure that efficacy is being focused on. More specifically, through the work of the board in developing elements of the governance core and engaging in self-evaluation it will force trustees to critically examine their work and recognize achievements and areas of growth. Trustees will need to believe that they are capable of engaging in this change, and this approach will support them developing a better sense of what they are capable of (Campbell & Fullan, 2019). In addition, other stakeholders such as the senior administrative team and staff need to believe that change will happen. It also provides an opportunity to identify detractors from the intended change and potentially address their issues. This phase will also benefit from both targeted and blanketed messaging as the work of the board towards effective governance must be consumed and understood by stakeholders. In this phase, it is also appropriate to celebrate the move towards a more coherent and effective governance

structure. These two strategies will utilize personal/small group meetings, stakeholder reports and social media.

Long-term Goals Phase

This phase recognizes that the governance core approach has been imbued into the work and lifeblood of the board. Once again, this is time to celebrate accomplishments, review success, and address areas that need to be improved upon. The most utilized strategy at this point will be the Blanket / Targeted Messages approach. This approach allows for stories of success and areas needing improvement to be shared widely for public consumption but also provides the opportunity to share specific information items to identified stakeholder groups. This strategy will include using social media, newsletters, personal letters, and formal media interviews. This would also be an appropriate phase to engage in Disseminating Information and Soliciting Input. At this stage, as we review success and need for improvement, it is important to provide stakeholders with the opportunity to provide feedback and input. This strategy will utilize surveys, townhall events, and stakeholder meetings to generate information to support a continued approach to improvement.

Next Steps and Future Considerations

As shared in Chapter Two, my PoP centres on the issue of superintendents and trustees needing to develop efficacy in developing effective governance practices. The need for board and superintendent to be working in unity as suggested by Campbell and Fullan (2019) creates a gap which must be addressed. The purpose of this OIP is to address that gap and provide a structured approach to implement the governance core approach in order to generate a more coherent, effective board and superintendent approach to governance. By engaging in the approach highlighted in this plan, trustees and I as the superintendent will build the skills

necessary to bring about the change required. This will result in the board believing that they can engage with their superintendent in an even more effective approach to governance. With a pandemic nearing a year since it began one may question the need to engage in change at this time. I believe that given the current context this is the exact time that boards and superintendents must become more effective in their governance practices.

Challenges and Risks

Campbell and Fullan (2019) share that the right time to engage in this work is now. Given that trustee elections will take place this October the timeliness of this OIP cannot be underestimated. Our first approach to implementing this OIP will begin this August in order to have the foundational elements established. While the short timeline poses a significant challenge, this will serve us well as the trustee handbook will become the orientation for new trustees (Campbell & Fullan, 2019). While the document will not be totally completed, it is my intention to have the core elements completed in order to use it as the initial orientation package for any new or returning trustees. Additionally, in order for this work to grow past the implementation stage the handbook must be continually updated. This work will serve as a strategy to consistently engage the board in the work of the governance core approach (Campbell & Fullan, 2019) and therefore further engage the McKinsey 7S model and the PDSA model as a part of the regular work of the board.

With the potential for a different configuration of trustees, it will be important to have structural elements such as a new format for board reporting and the format for meetings established prior to the election. This way the practice is a continuation and not trying to implement a change in the middle of a potentially significant event in the lifecycle of a board. It is important to note the potential risk that exists when a board election is held. There is a distinct

possibility that the as a result of an election an entirely new board may be created. The formal structures such as the board reporting mechanism and the board handbook are examples of critical elements that will support the continuation of the governance core approach and as a result, keep the board focused on effective governance practices. Essentially, elements such as these welcome new board members into an existing culture and set of practices. It may be necessary to reimplement portions of the initial implementation process to ensure that all board members fully understand the governance core approach to effective governance. Finally, the discussions regarding the need and urgency for change and a move to the governance core approach need to begin soon as the board has a moral imperative to be as effective as possible. The success of our students depends on it.

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